# 2012 to 2015 Eckhart Tolle TV Part 3

[Speaker 2] (0:02 - 33:24)

And on your next exhale, we'll step it up to a count of six. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Hold, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Continue like this, counting on your own. Remembering that if you find the count of six is strenuous for your body, go back to the count of four. Being aware of how you feel in your body.

Being aware of your breathing. Relaxing into this moment. Into your breath as you inhale, as you hold, and as you exhale.

Noticing at the end of the exhale, during the pause, during the hold, notice the stillness. And again, notice the stillness at the top of the inhale. Don't rush through the exercise, through the breathing.

It's just nice and slow, equal, balanced breathing. You can continue this breathing exercise for as long as you wish, but for this segment, let's do two more rounds, ending with your exhale and returning to regular breathing. Last round.

So it's exhale, then return to your regular breathing. Feeling the calmness in your body, the quietness of your mind, the relaxation of your body. And when you're ready, you can open your eyes and enjoy the harmony within.

Thank you. This breathing technique is a yoga breathing technique called Pranayama. It's an alternate nostril breathing.

So sitting up nice and tall, whether you're sitting on your yoga mat cross-legged or in like a sort of seated prayer position, kneeling on your knees, sitting back on your heels or sitting between your heels. Or you can even, since we're at the computer, be sitting in your chair, making sure that it's a firm yet comfortable chair, preferably not the sofa. And if you're sitting back in your chair, just check in to see whether you're kind of slouching back.

If so, just move, slide forward, and just come to sit at the edge of your chair. Spine is erect. Crown of your head is reaching towards the heavens.

Your chin can be slightly tucked in if you wish. Left hand stays on your lap, palm facing down. And with your right hand, raise your right hand, your thumb and your baby finger sticking out, and the three fingers facing down onto your palm.

We will begin by closing off the right nostril, and then you breathe in through the left nostril. And when you exhale, you close off the left nostril and breathe out through the right nostril. And then again, we breathe in through the right nostril, close off the right, and breathe out to the left, and so on.

We will equalize the breathing, first with a count of four, and then we'll step it up to a count of six. So, actually, before you start, you may wish to clear your nostrils. So, I won't do that in front of the camera.

It may not look so pretty, but I've done it. So, grab some Kleenex and clear your nostrils. And the other point I'd like to make is that if you are at all feeling congested today, we don't want to make your breathing into any strain or strenuous breathing.

It kind of defeats the purpose. So, if you're feeling congested today, you may wish to choose an alternate breathing exercise. And also, if you have any serious illness or are pregnant, you may wish to even consult a physician to see whether it's okay for you to be doing this kind of breathing technique.

So, let's begin. Sitting up nice and tall, crown of your head being lifted towards the heavens. Inhale through the left nostril.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Inhale, 2, 3, 4.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Continue like this on your own.

Last round, exhaling through the left nostril. And then when we inhale, we'll do it on the count of 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Continue like this on your own. Keep your attention fully on your breath.

Even notice the pauses between the top of the inhale and at the bottom of the exhale. One more cycle of this. Ending with your exhale with the left nostril.

Return to your regular breathing. And if need to, you can take a deep inhale and just exhale with another sigh. Just stay aware internally, noticing any change within your body, your mind, your emotional state, or even your state of consciousness.

This pranayama exercise can be done for 2, 3, 5, 10, 20 minutes. Choose the time that's right for you. Here's a simple breathing technique that can be done at any time.

And it's actually good to do when you're feeling perhaps a little stressed. When you notice that your breathing has become shallow, it just helps you to bring yourself back into your body. I even practice this breathing technique when I'm stopped at a stoplight.

When I'm doing the dishes. It actually can be done at any time. It's simply breathing, inhaling for a count of 4, exhaling for a count of 4.

Now you'll notice, especially if you're under stress emotionally, if the body's feeling stressed, or if you notice that you've been breathing really shallowly, even a count of 4 can be a little strenuous. So you can even start off with a count of 3, but generally a count of 4 is pretty good. And then when the body begins to relax, your mind begins to relax, and the breathing begins to kind of restore itself, up the count to a count of 6.

You can even up it to a count of 8. So it's equal inhales and equal exhales. So sitting up straight, spine erect, in a firm yet comfortable chair, your feet flat on the floor, crowning your head lifted towards the sky.

You may wish to close your eyes, and you don't have to close your eyes, but you may. So it's inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4. Exhale, 2, 3, 4. Continue like this, counting on your own.

And you'll notice that at the top of each inhale, there's just this natural slight pause. And then naturally, you exhale. And then again, there's a pause.

And then an in-breath will naturally occur. So you're not only connected to your breath, but stay also conscious of your body. Just noticing where there's any tension and bringing awareness to that area and consciously relaxing your body.

Feeling your breath becoming more equalized, more balanced. On your next inhale, we'll count to 6. So it's inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Continue like this on your own, counting to yourself. Noticing the belly rise as you inhale, filling your belly, your side body, your back body, your chest with air. And exhaling all the toxins from your body, all the stress, all the emotions.

If the count of 6 is not comfortable for you and you're feeling a little strained on this count of 6, return to the count of 4. Remembering to keep your chin level or at least slightly tucked in rather than tilted upwards. Upwards restricts your throat.

We want to keep the throat open. Breathing is life and you are life. Restore yourself at any time by simply breathing slowly and deeply.

And when you're ready, on your next exhale, just return to your regular breathing,

perhaps noticing that your regular breathing is deeper, is slower than when you started out. Noticing your state of consciousness now, body's calm, mind is calm. Restored the balance physically, emotionally, mentally.

And perhaps you've tapped into a higher state of consciousness, sensing the stillness. When you're ready, you can open your eyes and thank yourself for this breath of life. Namaste.

Welcome. Our segment today is on breathing. Breathing is life.

We survive without food for several weeks and without water for a few days. But without oxygen, we will die within a matter of minutes. We breathe in oxygen.

We breathe in the chi all around us. It sustains us. It revitalizes us.

In our bodies, in our minds. We all know how to breathe. Breathing is automatic, it's spontaneous, and it's natural.

In fact, we breathe even when we're not even aware of it. However, most of our breathing becomes modified or restricted. Usually this happens when we're under stress, when we worry, when we're filled with anxiety, when we're in fear, and sometimes even if we're in this habit of moving quickly, the pattern of the movement and breath follow each other.

If you've become in a habitual mode of being in fear, it's almost like that feeling of, you know, when somebody comes up behind you and you get scared and you go, and that freezes up our whole body, our lungs, and everything contracts, including our breathing. So then the breathing ends up just being very, very shallow, perhaps only breathing from one third of our capacity of our lungs, just up here, instead of that full belly breath of breathing in and breathing out. So proper breathing revitalizes you.

It brings and restores health in your body, in your mind, emotionally, and even can help you to a higher state of consciousness. I will teach you five different breathing techniques. Each one can be used at any particular time, but use the one that feels right for you in this moment.

An overview of the five breathing techniques. The first one is simply sighing. The second is a pranayama breathing technique.

The third is a chagang technique, and it's called abdominal breathing. The fourth is a breathing technique that equalizes, balances you, your system. Lastly, the fifth is a simple breathing technique.

[Speaker 4] (33:44 - 34:11)

I echo. I have met people in my life that have an awareness and an intuition that can

only come with presence. That's very attractive, and it invites trust.

So my question is, can presence be used to manipulate or use others?

[Speaker 1] (34:14 - 34:20)

Without going into detail, would you say that you have experienced something like that?

[Speaker 7] (34:21 - 34:21)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (34:27 - 46:40)

Now, presence cannot be used, but presence can arise and then be covered up again, and then the ego returns and claims something. It claims ownership of presence. That's one thing that can happen.

It claims the ownership of the power that is in presence. That's the downfall frequently of spiritual teachers who have periods of egolessness, and the ego has become dormant or stepped aside, and presence arises. But the ego is still lurking in the background, and then it reasserts itself.

And then you know it, whether the spiritual teacher claims some sort of specialness for him or herself. When he says, I'm the most advanced human that ever lived and ever will live on the planet, then you know that probably the ego has crept back in, even though that teacher might have uttered beautiful words only a few weeks ago, inspired words. So that can happen and has happened.

Another, there are certain abilities that some people have that's now the second part of the answer. There are certain abilities that some people have that sometimes look as if they were things that only an awakened human being, an ability that only an awakened human being would have. It sometimes appears like that.

For example, what in India they call siddhis, which are psychic powers, people who are able to, sometimes clairvoyant, or can tell you what the name of your grandmother was and at what age your grandmother died. They can perhaps influence others, infuse their own will into others and make people do certain things that otherwise they would not do. They can have a hypnotic effect on others.

And sometimes it looks to an outside observer as if you were looking at a highly evolved being, an enlightened being, but that is not necessarily the case because there are many humans who have psychic powers which do not necessarily go together with spiritual realization. But if you don't know that, you can easily be led to believe that these things can only come out of spiritual realization. If I levitated here and now and somebody films it, then suddenly large numbers of people all over the world would believe that I am the

most highly evolved human being on the planet.

But it could be that I simply have certain psychic powers like an athlete on the physical realm has developed enormous physical abilities that other humans don't have because he or she has trained certain muscles and limbs to move in certain ways. So he has things that are almost superhuman. In the same way, there are some humans who have psychic abilities.

They're like athletes in the psychic realm and doesn't necessarily go together with the absence of ego. In fact, it's quite dangerous if there's a big ego that is hidden. Egos are also good at concealing themselves.

So the ego is hidden and this person is able to bend spoons or to manifest things out of nothing. Well, it seems out of nothing, but maybe the sleeve is not nothing. It manifests somewhere.

I haven't practiced enough. I can't do it. So those things are often, of course, often used, not necessarily often used in the service of the ego.

But presence itself cannot be used by the ego. Ego can only come in once presence has been covered up, receded into the background, and then the ego claims something, perhaps because there was inspiration there. And then with some spiritual teachers, you can see the difference.

Once the presence has been covered up, also the quality of what they say is diminished. It no longer has the inspirational power that it had before. There's also a difference between charisma and presence that is sometimes confused by people.

There are certain humans, some are spiritual teachers, some are other humans that perhaps have certain powers or positions of power, who seem to emanate a very powerful energy field. And that is also, in those of you who don't know the difference, is going also be confused with spiritual attainment or enlightenment or awakening. Some spiritual teachers have both presence and charisma.

Some have only presence. Presence is more fine an energy field of a higher vibrational frequency than charisma. Charisma is a very powerful, it's basically it's chi or shakti that emanates from them.

And I have described chi or shakti, whatever you want to call it, as the bridge between the manifested physical world and the unmanifested formlessness. In between, as form is born out of formlessness, it becomes energy. The energy is the first manifestation is energy.

You can't see it with your senses. And that energy is chi. And then that energy flows into creating form.

So it's a bridge between form. And some humans are in touch with that level. And those humans have charisma.

Sometimes spiritual teachers have, as I just said, have both presence and occasionally charisma. Or psychic powers can often come with charisma also. And then you have people who are in powerful positions in the world.

And because of the energy that flows through them and the attention they're given by other humans, they develop the charisma. They are in touch with that energy source of chi. For example, obviously some of these are not necessarily great good people because that energy can be used for egoic purposes.

Hitler had great charisma, but so did, I'm told, somebody who met Bill Clinton even after he was no longer president. He still, as when he comes into a room apparently, everybody can feel that there is an emanation of energy there. And in the past, kings often had that.

In medieval times, the king had, many kings were reputed to have the ability to heal. And so they called it the royal touch and often sick people were brought into the presence of the king and he would place his hand on them and many of them were healed. And through perhaps the power of the energy added to that, of course, is also their belief that in the presence of the king you are healed.

So it was their own power, of course, very often that healed them. So it's sometimes hard to tell the difference unless you're already firmly established in presence yourself between charisma and presence. And some spiritual teachers, I don't know whether you had contact with what you just mentioned, whether that was a spiritual teacher that you had contact with and then you witnessed what you just described.

Yes. Yeah. Some spiritual teachers, I'm not mentioning any names, of course, whether they're alive or dead, I'm not mentioning any names, but there are some who very clearly had enormous energy outflow and people would get virtually addicted to their energy field.

Whenever they came into the presence of the teacher, they could feel, ah. And with presence, a little bit like that happens also because presence in one human being awakens your own presence. But the teacher needs to point out that what you're experiencing is yourself.

It's not the energy of the teacher. The energy of the teacher awakens your presence. But there's a misperception when humans are addicted to an external figure, to the energy that comes from that figure, they are dependent on him or her for their energy intake.

They suck in their chi or shakti and think they're being enlightened. But a very clear sign that they're not being enlightened is when they go back into ordinary life, they're just as

unconscious as everybody else. So there's no real change.

There's only an energy absorption, which really the energy you should find your own source from within rather than depend on an external source. So presence cannot be used. Two things can happen.

Either it's not presence, it's she in the service of the ego, or it was presence, but it became covered up, ego reasserted itself and then made claims and tried to manipulate people for its own purposes. Now, which one it is in your case, I don't know, but perhaps you will be able to see for yourself. The main thing is a person in presence, presence and ego cannot coexist at the same time.

So you can't have the ego can be in the background, but it cannot use, ego cannot use presence when presence is present. I understand.

[Speaker 4] (46:40 - 46:41)

Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (46:42 - 47:05)

Thank you. Is there another question that has not dissolved?

[Speaker 6] (47:16 - 47:18)

It only has partly dissolved.

[Speaker 1] (47:19 - 47:20)

Partly dissolved.

[Speaker 6] (47:20 - 48:02)

Hello, Eckhart. Moin, moin. My question deals with parents.

With practice and presence, I felt love for them after many years, not feeling love and feeling guilty for that. But I still have huge problems to meet them. When I meet them, if they are in the same room, even if I try to be aware of my breath and my inner body, after a while, I have huge pain body attacks.

[Speaker 1] (48:04 - 48:07)

Is that triggered by something they say?

[Speaker 6] (48:07 - 48:27)

I can't even say that. Sometimes it's the way I manage to go through the meeting quite fine, and my mother leaves the room and I break down. And, yeah, I don't know what it

is.

[Speaker 1] (48:29 - 48:32)

German parents can be difficult. Yes.

[Speaker 7] (48:33 - 48:34)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (48:35 - 57:57)

I know. American parents, too. So on one level, there's already an acceptance of them.

On a mental level, the acceptance of who they are, the acceptance of their limitations, they behave the way they behave. The pain body is still there inside you, of course, and the pain body reacts. It may also be that the mental level, the mental acceptance, is not yet complete either.

To see that they act the way they act, speak the way they speak, not because of who they are, but because of their past conditioning, which is their mental emotional conditioning is speaking through them. They can't help that. If there's not enough presence, everybody is controlled by their mental emotional conditioning.

They can't help it. They are afflicted by that disease, which is identification with unconscious conditioning. I'm not the only one who calls that disease.

Even in the ancient teachings of Zen, they sometimes call it the disease of the mind. And there are some Zen teachers who have said they are here to cure that mental illness. They've said that's what Zen is about.

It's curing that mental illness. So you need to, on the mental level, as you sit with them, you need to know that continuously that what you are observing is not who they are. You're observing a form of mental conditioning.

Underneath that, there is the being. And you may sometimes get a glimpse of it. My mother was very much identified also with her mind, and occasionally I looked into her eyes, and suddenly there was a light shining through when she stopped talking for a little while.

In other words, the mind catching a breath after talking for 10 minutes incessantly. And then for a moment I could see, ah, there's their being, her being was shining through. And I have one or two photos where her being shines through.

And then, of course, it gets obscured again. And then you get the same, get the suspicions, the complaints, the accusations, all the stuff associated with unconscious

thinking. So on the mental level, you need to know that, be present enough so that you don't forget that what you're observing is not who they are, but you're observing the past in them, the conditioning.

And then comes the emotions that you feel. Of course, there's your past, the past, the living past in you from your childhood, all the things they did or failed to do because they couldn't help it. There wasn't enough presence to change it.

So that's something for you to find acceptance. As you accept them, you accept what you feel at that moment. Whether you can even label it, we don't know.

Is it sadness? Is it anger? Is it heaviness or a mixture of all of that, a feeling of wanting to run away, a contraction, whatever it is, that's all there.

You don't need to even analyze it. You just need to feel the entire energy field of that, and it doesn't feel pleasant. And it's the past in you.

So there you're observing the past in them, acting out, and you experience the past in you. And so what do you do with two pasts? You have the past out there and the past in here.

Only presence can dissolve the past. So you need to access the power of presence in yourself. And how do you do that?

A quick way in a situation like this is the acceptance of whatever arises inside or outside at this moment. You accept this is what you feel. This is what they do or say.

There's the acceptance of the inner and the outer, because it is already happening. You have to accept or you suffer. In a way, if you don't accept, you suffer more.

If you don't want to feel what you feel, that's more suffering because you're resisting. Acceptance does something that I could describe as, let's say here's the emotional field and it doesn't feel good. And acceptance means just to say, okay, there it is, I can feel it.

I'm verbalizing. Acceptance doesn't even require, after a little while, you don't need words anymore. You can just see what is, be with it.

And at that moment, a little bit of space opens up around that emotion. A little bit of space. That space comes from your acceptance.

The acceptance gives it space. And that's already a tiny bit of freedom. You've given it a little bit of space inside yourself when you say, yes, this is what is.

And that's a beauty. You've given both them space externally to be, and you've given yourself space internally. And then, as you notice that actually, that feels already a little bit better than before because there's space around the emotion.

And then you go into it more deeply and you accept even more. You continue to accept. And that space grows a little bit around it.

And then you encounter the strange phenomenon of an emotion that is not pleasant existing in a spacious field, so to speak, that's around it. And then you realize that who you are is you are that field. And you can allow the emotion to be in that field and you can allow your parents to be there and say what they say and do what they do.

They're repeating the past. Space comes in. So acceptance brings space, and space is the transcendence of conditioning.

Space is the transcendence of the past. The transcendence, transcendence of the personality and the person, and it's freedom, space. That's the practice.

And so the best place to practice is with your parents. There are many other places where you can practice, but the ultimate mastery you will achieve when you can practice with your parents. That's the graduation.

You graduate. It's the PhD in presence. Don't jump into it too much.

If you say, okay, I'm going to spend a week with our parents now, it's too much, too much. Give yourself short time periods at first. Say, I'm going to come for coffee and cake.

That's what they like to do. At least my mother did. I'll come for coffee and cake, and I'll stay for an hour, or you know, if you can.

I don't know how that works practically. And then you practice. You give yourself one hour to practice.

And you know it's only an hour. I have to be present for an hour. And it's your spiritual practice.

So, as you know, I've written the quote in a book. Ram Dass said, if you think you're so enlightened, spend two weeks with your parents. Two weeks.

The ultimate test. So, happy practice. Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (58:21 - 59:22)

The Fyndhorn Foundation in the north of Scotland is a center of spiritual service in co-creation with nature, which emphasizes education and community. The Fyndhorn Foundation is at the heart of one of the best-known intentional communities in the world. It is a major international center of adult educational, personal, and spiritual transformation.

About 14,000 visitors a year come to the Foundation in one of the many ways that it is possible to visit, live, and work there. Eckhart Tolle gave a weekend retreat in the Universal Hall to a group of over 300 people. This is a record of that event.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:45 - 2:11:10)

Welcome to our weekend retreat at this beautiful, sacred place. Our theme for this weekend is stillness, which is inseparable from who you are in the depth of your being. One could say everybody is still already.

The stillness is already there. It does not need to be found even. It certainly does not need to be created because it's already there.

The only thing is you may not notice it. If there's a lot of mental noise, then you just don't notice it, that it's there. And also you don't notice the dimension within yourself that is far deeper than the movement of thought.

And your whole identity is then bound up with the movement of thought, a mind-created sense of self, a personal history and no more, that is soon coming to an end. Soon, next year or in 40, 50 years' time, it's soon. So who you are and stillness are one and the same.

And if you have not yet gone completely mad in this mad world, that means you have some access to the stillness inside you. You may not remember it afterwards because it's not memorable, since stillness is timeless and the mind cannot memorize it or think, oh, that was interesting, I'll remember that, because stillness is not interesting. Interesting is a mental thing.

Just as our weekend here is not going to be interesting. You may have noticed that already. But interesting is not the ultimate.

It's only the ultimate to the human mind. You can go out here and look at a tree or flower or the sunset, and could you say, this sunset is interesting? Only if you were trying to write a PhD about sunsets.

If you had to analyze it, or the oak tree. The oak tree becomes interesting the moment you start to analyze it mentally. And there is a place for that also in this dimension.

But if you get caught up on that dimension only, where you break things up into little bits and pieces and analyze them, and by the way, most kinds of analysis, you have to kill the thing first before you can analyze it, or in the process of analysis it gets killed. But if you just be with the oak tree, contemplate it, truly look, then what you're looking at goes beyond interesting. It's far deeper than interesting.

Same as the sunset. There's nothing interesting about it, and yet it is awe-inspiring. It is

deep.

There's a depth there that defies analysis by the mind. The moment you analyze it, you have reduced it to something lifeless. And most people in our civilization, and this has been going on for a long time, are trapped in that dimension where compulsively they go about their life analyzing, interpreting, and labeling things as soon as they enter their field of consciousness.

They do it to people. They do it to situations that they encounter, immediately have some personal reactive relationship to it. They do it to nature, and they can no longer perceive the sacredness that is there in nature because they approach it only through thinking.

And that is a dreadful present that you then end up in, the present of your own mind. And then you approach your whole life only through that. And your whole life becomes reduced to a conceptual reality in the head, consisting of thoughts that you have about things, viewpoints, opinions, and even so-called knowledge.

Knowledge is thought, a label, and gives the illusion that you know. And all it is, it's a thought that you have put on something. And then it loses its depth and aliveness.

And you begin to relate to reality through the veil of thinking. And you relate to yourself through the veil of thinking because you yourself become a conceptual thought-based entity, an egoic self, a me, with its unfulfilled personal history, its desires and fears and frustrations, and its hopes that it will find ultimate fulfillment of its unfulfilled and unfulfilling sense of self based on a story in the future, which again is a thought form. That's what the future is.

Nobody has ever encountered it except as a thought. And yet most people live unconsciously as if the next moment or the one after that were more important than this moment, the only thing there ever is. This one moment that you could never escape from, have never escaped from, will never escape from, that is inseparable from the life that you are, also inseparable from stillness, because the moment you enter the now with your attention, a stillness arises.

The essence of the present moment, no matter how mad it may appear on the surface, is always stillness. It is also sacredness. The only place where the sacred dimension can be found is now.

You have to be present to this moment. You have to wake up into this moment to realize that life is sacred. When you are lost in thought, sacred is meaningless.

It could become another of the many concepts that you can play with, and you could write a PhD about it without ever having encountered it yourself. So this, the depths of now, is inseparable from your very being, your very life, and it is a sacred one life. And

yes, this is why we're here, to deepen our awareness of that dimension.

And the sacred is everywhere. If you become truly present, you would find the sacredness everywhere. It's easier here.

In certain places that are called sacred, there is less of a density in the structures, the physical structures, the forms. There is a transparency almost to the form. Something shines through the forms, and this is why we call those places sacred.

But even here, there are some people who cannot sense that because they are not present enough when they walk in the garden. They are still in their head, thinking about where they are going the day after tomorrow, and the accumulation of problems, which are thought forms that are part of their sense of self. I have important problems to think about.

And occasionally you get a glimpse, three seconds of presence, and you get a glimpse, and immediately there comes the movement of thought again. So some people cannot be present here. Most of you can, and those who cannot, I believe, will quickly deepen and see how easy it is to be present, and how hard it is not to be present.

Normally people tell me the opposite. They say, it's so hard to be present. And this is what the mind believes, but the opposite is true.

Not being present to the now is hard. To live trapped in your mind is hard. That makes living into something that is a struggle and an effort, and you never get there, you never make it, because you live for the future, which is only a thought form.

And this is another aspect of living, trapped in thought, with your whole sense of self trapped in thought, hoping that at some point you will find yourself, complete yourself, or it's all going to work out in the end. And in the way the mind imagines it, it cannot work out, because every form dies, and every structure eventually dissolves again. And the mind only thinks in terms of forms and structures, and it hopes that life will work itself out on that level of structures and forms.

And it's always disappointed, because it cannot. And the miracle is, it's already working out at this very moment. It's already as it should be at this moment.

You have already arrived at the place of sacredness at this moment. It's easier to see it here, to sense that here. More difficult to feel that this moment is sacred when you find yourself at Piccadilly Circus or Times Square.

And you need to be an enlightened being perhaps, which simply means very present, to see the sacredness in the flashing Coca-Cola sign at Piccadilly Circus. And you need to be a Buddha to see the sacredness in a prison camp. And if one says the prison camp also has the dimension of the sacred, if one says that prematurely, this will be

misunderstood and really will not make sense unless you know within yourself that that which is beyond form, the one formless life, is indestructible.

And some people who were in prison camps realized it for themselves. So we are here to find that dimension that is deeper than thought within ourselves, that has nothing to do with time. And so people ask sometimes, how do I still my mind?

I want to find the stillness. And then, yes, there are some good meditation methods, and eventually that also has to be left behind, otherwise it comes in between who you are. You put a method there to find yourself.

That is a space between you and yourself. And every method eventually needs to be left behind. You don't need it.

It's the last thing you leave behind. And this particular teaching works without methods. But if you have a method, it's beautiful, and you use it until you don't need it anymore.

Every thought in your mind when you are not aware of it as a thought has a sense of self in it. A sense of I am. You identify with the movement of thought.

And that is the essence of unconscious living. And that is why people continuously live for the future. The thought form of future where they are hoping to complete their insufficient sense of self.

The happy ending of my story. This is not to say you should not pursue certain activities. Learn new things.

Explore new countries. Meet new people. Learn this and that.

Acquire knowledge, expertise here and there. Develop your abilities, physical or mental. And create whatever you are called upon to create in this world.

It is beautiful to create in this world. And on that level, of course, there is always more that you could do. And as you grow older, there are certain things that you can no longer do.

So gradually, on the level of form, your life becomes reduced. There are already many, many things that it is unlikely that I will be able to do. I am not going to win a title at Wimbledon anymore.

It would be a miracle if I managed to do that. Not totally impossible, but I'm not even going to try it. And many other things would say, well, it's just, it's too late.

And this is true. It's, for many things, it's too late. On the level of form, I need to accept, yes, no, I'm not going to be the heavyweight boxing champion.

It's just too late for that, or it never was possible. So on the level of form, yes, depending on where you are in years, there may still be many things that you can add to what you can do and what you know and what you explore. Or it may be that you're reaching the end of the lifespan of this form, so there's little time left, and there isn't that much more that you can add to yourself.

And that's fine, too. Now, the question is, are you looking for yourself when you attempt to add more to who you are? And that is the dilemma of human existence.

There's a compulsive searching for more. Not that there's anything wrong with doing new things. No.

But there is a compulsive striving towards the next moment and the next and the next, hoping to add more to who I think I am. Thought forms. Possessions, attainments, recognition by other people, all thought forms.

My, I have not enough yet. I don't feel secure enough. I only have five houses and three cars.

And I still don't feel secure. And I think the houses are not big enough. That must be the reason.

Or they all, they write about me in the papers, and then, okay, by the way, I don't have five houses. It's just an example. Or to get recognition, they all write about me, and then I read in the papers, finally people have recognized who I am.

They think I'm great. And that gives, temporarily gives you the feeling of I have now added that universal recognition to who I think I am. And many people strive for that.

They think, when are they going to discover me? When are they going to realize that I am special? They may never realize it.

There is a search for specialness in the mind-made sense of self that in some cases is fulfilled, and in most cases is not fulfilled on the level where it's seeking. And so in either case, that sense of specialness, you could say, there are two ways of being unhappy. Not getting what you want, and getting what you want.

Because all the people who have attained universal recognition in whatever field, they are not happy either. They are not at peace with themselves. They do not feel the sense of security and the sense of finally having arrived, that before they had it, they had associated with that idea.

Once people recognize me, then I will have arrived. And then the moment comes, and at first it feels good, and then you see that people's opinion of you are only thought forms, they are images that they create, or if they are very well known, the media creates a

fiction that has your name. And then you read about yourself in the paper, and you see, who is this?

They are writing about, there is nothing to do with me at all. And so many people become unhappy, even more unhappy, when they attain recognition. The world tells them, yes, you are special, and yet, I don't feel special.

Or they say, this is an illusion, that's not me, it's an image, a mind-created image. And a few people then go beyond all the mind-created sense of identity, because they have attained what the world tells us is desirable, wealth, property, recognition, attainment, here or there, and yet, it has not provided them with what they were really looking for, myself, a sense of being rooted in life, the fullness of life, as Jesus calls it, the fullness of life. And so there are many famous people who take drugs, and they need to dull the dreadful unhappiness they feel inside, because even the illusion of more in the future, that most people are still living by, doesn't work anymore, because if you already have everything, the illusion that the more, by attaining more in the future, you're going to be happy, can't work anymore for you.

What a dreadful fate. You can't look to the more anymore to feel that you are yourself. And so they feel even more unhappy.

They cannot escape into the next moment anymore. So they need to take some drugs so that for a little while, I feel better. Or a few break through to a deeper level within themselves, and realize that that sense of specialness that operated on the level of better than, or more than, was an illusion.

You can't pursue it, and it will take you nowhere. It can never fulfill itself because it is a thought form, me, the special one, that you wanted to incorporate into the story of me, that is the basis of your identity as long as you are trapped only in thought. Me, the special one.

Some people have the fiction in their head that they are... I don't want to take away anybody's fiction if they still like it. You could have the fiction in your head that in a past lifetime you were Napoleon.

And that can give you a sense of specialness, but it is derived from the movement of thought and images. But that keeps some people going. Nobody might agree with you that you were Napoleon, but at least, temporarily, it keeps you...

But you have to keep thinking about it, and tell the story to others. And others have other stories where other people say, yeah, that's true, that's who you are. But it is based on the movement of thought and the emotions that go with those thoughts.

So you have a whole identity based on a personal history. Very little. And it's not going to last very long.

The soap bubble of my personal history is going to pop soon. And everybody can say, I'm not predicting my imminent death, nobody knows. But everybody's death is ultimately imminent because one year or 50 years, it comes quite soon.

And it'll be now when it comes, not tomorrow. And so to be trapped in that sense of self, a conceptual reality, that is a dreadful fate. It's constant neediness, which even gets translated into the spiritual once you have realized, okay, I'm done with possessions, I know that that's not it.

But be careful here with other thought forms that arise to replace. For example, you might have spent 20 years of your life making money, and then you see, okay, I'm now giving away my BMW, I'm going to buy a bicycle because I'm spiritual. And I will only wear certain spiritual clothes or this or that, it doesn't matter what it is.

I'm on my bicycle, and then I can be on my bicycle and look at the person who is still so unconscious that he's driving his BMW and can think how much superior I am in my spiritual. And of course what you're carrying now is a much heavier thought form than the BMW thought form. So your sense of self has become, can, it could, it's quite possible that the BMW man has less of a sense of self than the man on the bicycle.

It's possible, probably not, but it's possible. So be careful with any, how the mind shifts and then chooses another story to feel, but always to feel, to make itself feel more than in one way or another so that it can, it works through comparison because it's thought, I think of, I have an image of who I am and then I need to compare that to who I think other people are. So I impose images on myself, mental concepts and images and then I impose them on others and then I compare my image with that image.

Hmm, okay, I'm more spiritual than this or he's more spiritual, he's been at it for much longer than me. And then you get how much you know. Knowledge is another one.

You casually mention from your great store of knowledge, you casually mention a few things and the other person is dumbfounded, doesn't know what you're, and it is, it's obvious that you know more than he. And that gives the feeling of ah. And so it works with little things to enhance it's always very precarious sense of self and then it loves being right and it loves others to be wrong because it's the only way you can be right.

It loves being right and feels itself enhanced momentarily through ah, I'm right. So it's always the strengthening of the fiction of self, the fiction of me, me and my story and that people go through life looking for that. That's the purpose of their life is to strengthen the fiction of me.

And so that becomes the motivating force behind their actions, what they do. And it's always, it's an uneasy thing because very often you feel less than somebody else and then you have to kind of work around that. Less special than he.

He knows more but on the other hand I look better. Laughter And then other people, if they cannot achieve the specialness in the way in which the world tells us you ought to be special, they achieve a reverse specialness by feeling unfairly treated by life. By feeling that they are a victim of certain people or situations and in their thought form of being a victim they feel very special.

So you can still win even if you lose. The mind is very clever. And a victim identity can be very strongly lodged in some people's minds and as soon as you meet them and after five minutes they will tell you their story.

You know what happened to them. 25 years ago it happened. And of course, yes, dreadful things did happen 25 years ago and they happen today also in this mad world but building an identity around some form of suffering that happened at some point or repeatedly in this mad world where suffering is inevitable to build a sense of specialness around that then you have put yourself into a dreadful prison with bars all around but at least you think you know who you are. You have a story.

Oh great, at least I have a story. My life treated me more unfairly than most people. I can feel more then.

And so whatever the mind it will find something to give itself an identity a conceptual identity and it is very much afraid of losing the story of abandoning it stepping beyond it and usually the story needs to become unpleasant for people to be pushed out of it. It's because in a way the story is a dream. A dream of who I am.

And if a dream becomes very unpleasant then you will want to wake up. No dream of me is ultimately all that pleasant but some are more unpleasant than others. So see how the self the conceptual self continuously tries to survive not only to survive and protect itself from others and to use others to enhance itself use them in one way or another and that determines the relationship between humans when you haven't stepped beyond that there is wanting to use another human or feeling you need to protect yourself from another human being.

Those are the two things that govern relationships in the egoic state. You either use them or you fear them. You need them and you are afraid of them and sometimes both at the same time.

And of course that also means there is no true relationship. It gets distorted because you don't know who you are. You have only an image in the head.

That tries to make itself stronger because it doesn't feel enough yet. I'm not enough yet. And so for some people the sense of specialness is attained by frequent complaining in the head and out aloud about life and situations and people and what's going on and it really shouldn't be happening.

They should do something about it. It's all very bad indeed. Why doesn't he?

And there is blaming continuously complaining and blaming and that the ego loves because it makes itself right by doing that. When you complain about something or somebody you feel you are right and the person or the situation you complain about is wrong. I'm not saying complain in a practical sense where you say I'd like to exchange this thing that I bought because it's not working.

That's fine. It's practical and you do something about it. But the complaining that is the telling of stories in the head that has no practical purpose whatsoever that constantly is in a conflict relationship with the present moment.

There's always something about it that isn't right and so you complain or something has just happened and you complain or you complain because it hasn't happened yet. So many people feel they cannot be themselves or truly at peace with themselves because of something that happened or something that hasn't happened. Those are the two reasons why you cannot be yourself.

Either something has happened and that's preventing me from being myself truly or something hasn't happened yet and if that doesn't happen I can't be myself. Isn't that it's a strange thing? I need something to happen so that I can be myself.

So we are not all the many ways we are talking about this here so that you can recognize it when it happens in you because it is a universal pattern in every human. It's inherited. It is the collective human mind in its egoic unconscious state that operates in that way.

That keeps you trapped on the surface of your being on the little surface movement the wave movement of life the forms of life all the things that happen and you're continuously you're trapped in that on the level of form just and of course on the level of form which includes even thought forms they are primordial forms when you are identified with every thought that comes into your head and of course there is never an end to it because the next thought comes immediately afterwards it's a string and so it goes the whole day long and you go and occasionally you get the little glimpses that keep you sane so that you can still survive here you are not they keep you from committing suicide or they keep you from going totally insane you have little moments of and they may be short but they keep you alive there is a little bit of joy seeping through from the depths of your being through the layers the heavy layers of mind there is a little bit a little crack appears here and there if it didn't you would be totally lost in here and you certainly wouldn't be sitting here and so occasionally there is moments it may be when there is sudden beauty and it's overwhelming or sudden a moment of danger that wakes you up out of the continuous voice in the head and suddenly there is more intense aliveness beingness presence and then thought comes back or it could be for some people danger in the form of physical illness can come and suddenly that

wakes you up and suddenly you realize all the things that you pursued and you thought were important are not important at all so already something collapses on the level of thought all the things that mattered so much and suddenly you develop a physical illness and see it doesn't matter at all and so that can be helpful for some it can be an awakening for some people or it may be some people are kept sane by an animal because whenever it's the only way they can relate to another being that is non-conceptual because when they meet humans they are trapped in the concepts that they have about every human they meet they impose mental concepts and images in the form of what they think about they know exactly what they think about you they are not relating to you they are relating to the thoughts in their head they have about you and most people do it to each other so you have only two thought made entities trying to be in a relationship each one both needing and fearing the other and this is of course why relationships are so problematic these days so some people are kept sane by an animal and that the pets fulfill an incredible function that hasn't been fully acknowledged and recognized in this world they keep humanity sane because there you have when you touch the dog or the cat whatever it is and for a moment you are not some people even there they carry ego but those are the extreme cases you touch the animal and this you can be yourself you don't need to psychologically protect yourself from the animal or want something from you just can be with that and you can something transmits itself because the animal lives more deeply connected with the source of life than most humans less removed or one could say the illusion has not grown to such an extent of being a separate entity a me and the rest of the universe the animal still has the oneness with the totality hasn't lost it totally is deeply rooted in being so the animal does not create a world of problems the animal is one with life and humans have separated themselves from life they have a conceptual image this is me and there is the rest of the world there is a barrier and there is the other the other human being a dreadful concept other and they are needing others and fearing others walking through life and other is a mentally another concept so the egoic self the stronger you are trapped in the egoic sense of self the more you will emphasize the otherness of others and others will all become reduced to walking caricatures because the few labels that you have about them you reduce them and they are basically all caricatures and sometimes when people you listen to people they mention about somebody they met or somebody they know and see how stupid that person is and they have a few judgments and when you listen to that you see this caricature of this strange distorted human being and when you meet them you say this is the person you were talking about yeah and so the animal is not burdened by the continuous stream of thinking it does not have a conceptual identity like the humans so it hasn't separated itself so it can be an access point for some humans into being where they can be with a being without and it is for some humans it's a moment when they actually thought subsides when they pat their dog or you have a purring cat on your chest suddenly you think thought quietens becomes more quiet and you have a space of stillness and you feel the purring of a cat on your chest or simply to watch an animal can be if you can truly watch it can take you out of your mind and you

become present because the animal is present and the same with the realm of nature the trees and the flowers and the blades of grass they are all present they are all surrendered to life one with life a beautiful temporary expression of the one life and so for some humans that's their only access point and for some even that doesn't work anymore I knew someone with a very strong ego who had ego battles with her cat if the cat didn't come she had the kitchen window open and the cat one evening didn't appear and she was where's my cat and then she would shut the window and said if she doesn't want to see me I don't want to see her and so the poor cat had to stay outside all night that also happens or there are cases where humans cannot even relate to animals anymore so this is where and so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient always feeling a sense of lack always needing more always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other needing some kind of conflict so that it's separate sense of self can remain intact what can I be in conflict with today what can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself ah there it is and so when millions of humans live like that then this what then the result is what we read as human history a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet incredible suffering and so the same you see on television tonight when you switch on the news you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage and yet here we are here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of one could say collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from and so one could say well how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind and of course you can ask the same question on a personal level how can does God allow me to be ill how dare he she it to allow me to be ill to suffer and of course within the larger as a whole everything has its place and everything is as it should including your personal illness for the moment doesn't mean healing cannot happen but there are many humans here who were brought here who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives physical illness perhaps or some great loss and so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering your physical suffering whatever it may be to some extent began to dissolve the ego the egoic structures in your mind it started to shake it loose so that something else could come through and you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment and then you end up here and no matter what your story is and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake the story of me was all one big mistake you are here now and that's an amazing thing to be to be here now and see that was the story and the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realise it as yes on the level of form this is how my life unfolded and now let me speak personally for one moment I could easily look upon my whole life let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago it happened before that nobody told me I was important until that I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster nothing actually worked out I tried that for a few years and then I was at university and then I did my PhD

and then I gave that up and then I drifted for two years and then I went into that and then I tried that and it didn't things many things ok and then my mother said ok now you are 45 where what have you achieved others have already built up big businesses and so on the level of story it was a big disaster and yet fortunately at some point already I had given up identification with the story that the story was only my identity up to the age of 29 and it was a very unhappy one even there even when I was that was my relatively successful the only worldly success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student and it made me happy for two weeks and so how isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower the flower of consciousness and perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows you have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism the symbol of Buddhism the lotus flower it grows it has its roots in the mud and it grows out of that and there is nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story ah and the good news is every story ultimately fails because the forms because the story is based on the forms it identifies with forms and no forms last for that long no building lasts for that long eventually it crumbles all forms are temporary and they are beautiful the essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible but even this beautiful form finchon it is not eternal as a form but the eternal shines through the forms here that is why because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here so that that which is beyond form no matter what we call it stillness presence beingness a deep sense of I am that before got mixed up with the story of me and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness what the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story I want to be special that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being and that is what deep down you can sense even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self they feel that there is somewhere there is something precious that is me but they confuse it with the forms thought forms it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form with thought and a story in the head and that is what the Buddha calls the fictitious self the self that the Buddha even 2,600 years ago recognized as an illusion an enormous insight the greatest perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion and by that he means the self that is identified with any form thought form physical form anything and that is the illusion to lose oneself in some form and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form one could say incarnates in form and there is nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form but if you lose yourself in the incarnation and ultimately you had to do that too that was part of the totality of how things work to lose oneself is as the Buddha called it suffering then you suffer because you you you don't know who you are anymore you're looking for yourself in some form in some thought form in some physical form that you identify with which is

also a thought form me and so everybody is looking for the essence of their being not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more so the one place it's all like some strange game the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look which is the present moment they look there for themselves and to feel I want to be more on the level of form you can temporarily be more that's true and then that dissolves again but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate you do not need to be more you are already a full expression of the one life you are already complete on the level of the timeless the essence of your being now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth for that one could say you need time to hear the message that to be who you are you don't need time but the paradox is there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless and they don't come here they need in other words they need more time they need to continue to look for themselves and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search that is part of the larger design to be the frustration is built into human existence and so that's what the world is for the so called world it is there to frustrate you and to drive you deeper to eventually drive you out of identification with form because as long as you identify with form it is so frustrating and you can never make it you can never arrange the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need you think you need to be yourself or sometimes you can do it for very brief a very brief time span you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life my health is good my relationship is great great money got possessions everybody loves me they all write good things about me it's all working my job my living situation my finances my health my relationships they're all great but before long something there starts to crumble here and there it's either the finances or it's the relationship or it's the living situation it's in the nature of the world of form that nothing stays fixed for very long and so it starts to crumble again here you just it sorted it all out and so that's why humans they experience life as a series of frustrations why can't it work and it doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there they are demanding that the world of form should make them complete and happy I demand that this world should complete who I am should give me my sense of self I just need this and that from there and then that's all this is what I demand and then it's not happening there's something wrong here life isn't working it seems to be working for everybody else but it's not working for me I read in the magazines all these glossy people they it seems to be working for them but only if you look at the glossy pictures if you visited them at home you would see that it's not working for them either so it's built into living here is frustration it's meant to be frustrating this is the larger the whole there is a purpose but people haven't seen it so it's quite a relief to recognize first of all the world cannot make me happy to demand that situations people places or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated whether I attain or do not attain okay so that looks very negative doesn't it that's and that's why when you don't go deeper when you only see the surface you see oh all is vanity as the old testament

prophet said vanity of vanities all is vanity I've seen it all I can't remember the exact words but I'm giving you a free translation I've seen it all I've done it all and it's all completely meaningless that's what he said and that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all and now why did they put this into the bible isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain whatever you can achieve is vanity they put that in there because when you see the truth of it you're already becoming free of it the seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy the seeing of the short lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in real life what is it in you that is able to see that and say ah or even laugh what before was a dreadful story and frustration you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma but the human condition and you derived your sense of self from that which is nothing personal whatsoever it's the human condition and that it's the human condition in it's unconscious state it's unenlightened state and that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to and now you step out of it by simply seeing it the seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness and that is why they put it into the bible because when you see it that which can witness that in you the impermanent nature of all forms the fictitious nature of the mind made story what is it in you that is able to look at that and see ah that is not thought that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it there

[Speaker 7] (2:11:10 - 2:11:10)

ah

[Speaker 1] (2:11:10 - 2:14:53)

or let's say better the light of awareness shines on it the light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in the frustrating story of my life and there is no life that is not ultimately frustrating it only begins it loses it's frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your satisfaction or for yourself when you give up demanding that people places situations should make you happy and give you fulfill you you don't demand it anymore then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are because life at this moment already always is as it is it always the isness you cannot doubt whatever forms appear in the present moment it always is as it is and so most humans are in a conflict relationship with the isness of life they internally run away from it or reject it criticize it complain about it or look somewhere else I don't want to I don't want the isness of this I want that so when you see what the world cannot do for you you no longer you drop your demand because you see it as absurd to demand something of the world that it cannot deliver and then you can simply be with whatever is and is and this moment are always inseparable of course whatever is at this moment is as it is I don't demand that this place even if you come here and you demand that Fenton should make me happy if you came with that demand you would

probably already have experienced frustration here because no place is capable of doing that for long or doing it at all and so you come here and say little things oh that shouldn't be here there's a there's a royal air force base right next to the spiritual center it doesn't make sense and so you can complain about that that shouldn't be why did they put that here they should have gone somewhere else and then you can say I came here to find peace and what do I find I find screaming jets this stuff I'm going home and that's only one thing and you'll find many more my roommate snores I can't get a night I can't I have to wait for the bathroom and it's not sunny this is late May and it's not sunny I should never have come to Scotland so if you just little examples of if you expect a place to fulfill you it can't do that in no place even if you went to a South Pacific island there would be something that is not quite right it doesn't fit there whatever it is the sunshine every day it's too much

[Speaker 7] (2:14:56 - 2:14:57)

the mosquitoes

[Speaker 1] (2:14:57 - 2:49:58)

at night they didn't I didn't know about that they didn't mention them in the travel brochures so here again a beautiful opportunity to drop the demand that a particular place should make you happy or give you peace or help you find yourself and simply then bring a yes to whatever form this moment takes instead of demanding that's the form of this moment should be different in order to satisfy me so you bring an inner alignment into your relationship with the present moment let's put it like that the way in which you relate to life which is always now only now an inner alignment comes in with now so you do not internally separate yourself from now which is life life and now are one because that is a source of great frustration and suffering and so whatever form this moment takes there's a jet flying it may be raining and then there's some sun coming through good, bad the mind could call this good could call this bad but it all is as it is at this moment and an enormous freedom comes into your life when you drop the demand that this should be other than it is and then you no longer demand that Fenton should make you happy or give you peace and then every moment or rather the one moment is as it is you go one step at a time to wherever you go and you look around and you stand and you walk and you sit and there are people coming people going things here things there and suddenly as you bring an inner alignment to the now something arises within you that has nothing to do with the form that this moment takes and it arises because you allow the form that this moment takes to be as it is so in allowing the form that this moment takes internally embracing it saying I might as well say yes because it is life because it is the only moment there ever is the now I might as well embrace it say yes that's how it is this does not diminish your ability to change if anything needs changing action arises out of the alignment with what is so you can be aligned with getting something that is not good you can have food that's gone cold or something and then

you bring it back to the kitchen and you say this food is cold would you please heat it up again if it's possible nothing wrong with that but it's the action comes out of alignment the same action could arise out of an inner resistance to what is and then there's immediately self comes in a complaining self a self that enhances itself through it's complaints and then walks the same action but with a fundamentally different energy field you then walk with a plate to the kitchen and say what is this don't you know don't you heat your food here what you should be this you should be serving hot you are in this your action is to enhance yourself through it to make the self right to strengthen the fiction of me and then you do that to another human and that other human is going to defend itself and try to react in order to resist the diminishment of their sense of self because that's what the ego tends to do it says you are wrong it tries to diminish the fiction of that other person and then the other will defend itself and come up with even bigger canons and start shouting back at you in order to defend it's diminishment again the diminishment of the fiction what a world so you could live when you live in alignment with what is intelligence arises in your life that is far greater than the accumulated knowledge of the mind or the ability of the mind to analyze or solve IQ problems or crossword puzzles that sort of limit very tiny form of intelligence nothing wrong with it but it's tiny but that's what this world calls intelligence you can memorize and analyze and be quick in giving answers manipulate thoughts and keep as many thoughts as possible in your head and yet there's a far deeper intelligence that our civilization knows nothing of and that and it's that out of which all true creation comes true creativity comes and so that is accessed when you bring a yes no more than that a yes to the present moment that by the way includes the past because there are some people who carry a strong grievance or resentment connected with something that happened in the past somebody did it to you or a situation happened in the past and there's still a strong grievance that they carry and how does that work when I say accepting the present moment accepting the present moment the way it is now includes accepting the past because it is only because you believe that something that happened in the past is interfering somehow with your ability to be alive or to be yourself or to be fully yourself at this moment you're saying okay maybe you lost a limb or something like that somebody cut it off ten years ago and you carry the grievance so how does when you accept this moment as it is you accept this as it is one limb is missing that is as it is that is the form that this moment takes well and you accept that this is how it is then you don't have the reference to the past anymore as having caused that and on the level of form of course that is a disability it prevents you from winning Wimbledon this year you can't do it anymore yes on the level of form perhaps that imposed some limitation on your life but the world is full of limitations that are inherent in form if it's not one set of limitations you will encounter some other set of limitations so there's almost never a present moment that does not have certain limitations even the noise coming occasionally from the Air Force Base next door could be considered a kind of limitation or even if you can't get a good night's sleep because your roommate snores could be considered a relatively minor limitation in your life but there are large limitations and

they are also to do with the world of form and that's what the world of form does you can exchange limitations you can of course improve your life on the level of form there's nothing wrong with that as long as you are not looking for yourself in it it's beautiful to play with forms in your life okay I'm going to make money now I'll play with that but not hoping that once you've made enough then you can finally be someone if you're not someone now being you cannot find it through money or through future then you can play with the world of form and the miraculous thing is when you drop your demands towards the world of form that it should make you happy then wherever you find yourself whatever situation you find yourself in whoever you meet wherever you go place situation person is actually quite satisfying because you have touched something within yourself that is deeper than the movement of thought which is form deeper than form the movement of thought is still form so the simple thing of internally bringing a yes to this moment is that all yes but it needs for you to do that requires a certain degree of presence to be able to say this is as it is instead of being taken over by an old reactive pattern governed by the fictitious self that says this doesn't fit into the story of me or how can I fit this into my this isn't completing my story in fact this shouldn't be in my story at all get out of here so many people they're walking stories often when they meet other humans they don't want to be with other humans they say get out of my story you shouldn't be in here I want somebody else in here and again so you step beyond you step out of the movement of thought and the stillness and the peace arises the moment you become friendly with what is that's all become friendly with what is no matter what form this is takes it's going to change anyway quite soon and people who are stuck for years are usually stuck because there is a resistance pattern inside them that keeps them stuck in the same situation and the resistance pattern says I want to get out of this dreadful place that I'm in and every day they go to the office and they say this is and the same energy is there the negativity and the resistance and every time they answer the phone yes and so you get some people traditionally people at government offices carry a lot of frustration I don't know if that's still true probably it's everywhere these days and so you people are continuously and they say why am I stuck in this boring job with all these dreadful people they always want something from me and 25 years later they're still stuck and complaining and then they hear the message it is possible to live differently it is possible to say yes not to not say yes to a story not say yes to okay I might as well accept that I've spent 25 years in this dreadful office and I'm probably going to spend another 10 years in this dreadful office I might as well say yes to that because I read that in a book somewhere no this has nothing to do this has nothing to do with bringing a yes to some kind of story about your life or if you were in prison to say okay I might as well accept that everything has failed in my life and I've been in here for 20 years and I've got to do another 15 years and I might as well accept that I've been a miserable failure nothing saying yes to the present moment only means the present moment not a story it means it takes you out of the story and that is vital in your spiritual life now as a spiritual practice as often as possible to break the continuity between past and future okay I'm coming from there and I'm going there I'm just busy

trying to get there and getting this done I'm on my way there don't stop me now and break okay but what about this moment where are you at this moment this moment oh and suddenly you wake up out of that stream of past future that was pulled you from past to future always that is old conditioning same old thing same old thing no matter how much you complain the more you complain the more you're stuck and suddenly you take the present moment out of the story and you and you ah you wake up and suddenly alertness comes for example you might hear the birds singing oh and you realize it's beautiful and you feel yourself breathing and you feel an aliveness in the body every cell is alive the life that you are that which animates the body and you as you feel that aliveness you're also aware that there's a stillness around you and in that stillness there's this incredibly beautiful sound that this little being produces which is a celebration of life every moment you've stepped out of the story into the aliveness of the present moment and yet you can still deal with things you may still be walking wherever you have to go and when you arrive there you're there and confront another human being you can still be present so there's more and more presence rather than time it's reversing whereas before you were dominated by time now you use time still but allow presence in which means break the story as much as often as you can step out of into the aliveness of this moment and then a far greater intelligence comes in and love and joy all the things that otherwise you can only think about but never experience all those things suddenly come in and transform even the story not that the story is ever going to be continuously wonderful in the level of form forms always come and go but because you're not dependent anymore on the forms of your life the circumstances of your life you have access to the life that is beyond form that is you the stillness the aliveness the I am that is deeper than I am this or I am that and then all those all the beauty and aliveness and joy that is there in the moment even if the forms were crumbling it can be there you would be missing the whole thing because you would be drifting continuously adrift in the mind only and the bird you would not even hear it or hear it for a moment and say oh that's pretty and then ok my problems what are my problems whenever you think you have problems a good question is what is the problem now well well I'm trying to see my lawyer about this thing and there's a bank I'm going bankrupt and I'm seeing my lawyer about what is the problem now what is the problem what is the problem there's no problem I'm sitting here breathing beautiful birds sing birdsong stillness space there's an aliveness that I feel inside every cell is alive there isn't really a problem now but there may be one tomorrow and of course when tomorrow comes you have to ask the same question what is the problem now as you sit in front of the lawyer I say sign here to declare your bankruptcy you say ok what is the problem now here's a piece of paper and here's a pen scratching on a piece of paper and then you put it down and you listen to the bird and see the tree and the flower and the aliveness within and say I'm still alive so you don't need the idea I am a bankrupt person to give you your sense of self anymore because your sense of self comes from the life that you are the aliveness of your very being and then yes on the level of form it happens that I had to declare bankruptcy I'm still breathing and the bird is still singing and a million people before me

have survived that and this is just one example a more extreme example a friend of mine Byron Katie a spiritual teacher was visiting a woman in hospital who had advanced cancer and she came into her room hospital room and the woman was of course very unhappy and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman got even more unhappy and she said you don't see a problem I'll show you a problem and she took off her blanket and showed her right leg was two or three times the size of her left leg this is a problem and Byron Katie said oh so your problem is that you think your right leg should be the same size as your left leg and in that moment the woman laughed for the first time in a long time she laughed because she dissociated from the thought form she stepped out of thought which judged this form as wrong which judged the present moment as wrong should not be it was she was trapped in the thought form this should not be invested with a sense of self and so the stepping out is vital for you the story has a momentum that will reassert itself again and again because that is the momentum of the mind and I'm not saying that you no longer deal with things in your daily life you deal with them much more effectively when you have access to the deeper dimension where true intelligence resides that can then flow even into the way in which you deal with things on the level of form so even on the level of your story the story will unfold more harmoniously when you no longer demand that it should make you happy or do anything for you then you can truly honour this level of form because the neediness is gone because you are not looking to it anymore to give you a sense of who you are because who you are comes out of the aliveness and depth of this moment and so to step out of the story and into this moment as much as you can it's vital always, ok just a second why is it now especially when you get upset you lose yourself in some thought movement or you can help others if you have an agreement with your partner or friend and when you can see that they are not losing themselves in thought which almost certainly is going to be a world of problems it's not that they are solving problems by thinking they are creating problems by thinking to solve the true solutions always come when you for a moment you step out of thinking and become truly intelligent by becoming still and present and alive and then if thought should come back often a little later you suddenly have a creative insight that before wasn't there it came because that dimension operated in your life and then it comes more and more and then everything changes your relationships change because you don't demand that the other person should do something for me make enhance my sense of self you don't compare yourself to others and try to be more than another to strengthen your sense of self it's fine to allow everyone to be as they are and you don't need to change them to say you should behave differently and then I'll be happy if you behave differently you will make me happy but in the meantime I'm going to be very unhappy and I'm going to show you that I'm unhappy so that you behave differently and then finally make me happy and many relationships work like that the partners show each other they're very unhappy because they want to change in their behavior and of course by their unhappiness they strengthen the same pattern and so especially in this beautiful place here don't pollute the garden of Fintan and be a walking story here that is heavy your steps become heavy

and where a walking story steps no grass grows and so humanity has that that is collectively how humanity is on the planet now a great heaviness has descended on the planet and that is the collective human mind with its accumulated enormous amount of negativity and dreadful delusion and that's the heaviness that weighs heavily on nature also and life forms all life forms feel that pain so here step lightly don't carry the burden of personal selfhood around with you which is your past and your problematic future but be light as take one step at a time and be the presence through which you perceive be there with every step and when you perceive the tree the flower you are able to perceive against the background of stillness so you are not creating a barrier of concepts between nature and yourself a oneness a field of oneness arises between nature and yourself and then nature will be extremely helpful it's teaching you to be one with life to be still just go to any tree and see how still it is and the moment you notice how still and alive and surrendered to life the tree is that in you which notices that is the stillness otherwise you wouldn't even see that there's stillness there if you approach it only with thought you would have some kind of personal thing to do with nature oh that tree that would be great in my garden and don't feel guilty if that thought crossed your mind or even more the wanting to pick a flower don't do it here but you know also why I must have that it's mine now even on that level the personal self can come in or it comes in oh that that looks like a tree that my aunt Mary had ten years ago in her garden I wonder if it's still there she was a strange person wasn't she but to be truly present there as a field of aware presence walking and then it may happen that in addition to the beauty that you see around you and give give walk sometimes and be with give some attention to perhaps a tree or flower for a little while just be with it without no wanting nothing just being with it and then you may notice there's the form you may notice in the background the presence that you are the light of consciousness in which this tree appears the presence the stillness that you are as a background to whatever you perceive birdsong trees flowers different noises in nature and so there's the that which appears the form and that which is the space that enables this form to appear which is the space of yourself the space of now the space of consciousness the one consciousness the light of consciousness in which forms forms appear so that is and even here as you sit here you can sense that in the foreground there's this room there's the voice the shapes and colours and yet what is it that makes all this possible to be the being being itself before it becomes something that is the one life the one consciousness that you are underneath the form so you are in two dimensions one could say at the same time the formless and form there's the and this is your practice in nature nature is not challenging it doesn't you can stay present easily with a tree or flower human beings are more challenging and so they pull you quickly into identification again with form with thought reaction because most humans still come from thought and they are thought entities and they want you to contribute to their universe and they say give me more thought confirm to me that my story is important and then you can tell me yours and I'll do the same for you and in bed tonight as you lie there you may find the mind wanting to drag you along with it again and think about okay there's only one more day or whatever it is one more day or three

more days or four more days left here and then I have to think about the things that are waiting for me when I get home let me think about my problems now and then you suddenly remember ah the now all there ever is this moment where is it of course you can't see it but sometimes it happens that you wake up your sense perception suddenly wake up

[Speaker 7] (2:49:58 - 2:49:58)

ah

[Speaker 1] (2:49:58 - 3:08:54)

and then you feel the aliveness in the body and you can lie on your bed feeling the aliveness within it permeates the body yes this life it's subtle but it's there and then the need to think lessens and you can just be a field of aware presence and perhaps you can listen to certain noises that you hear from nature and if it's your roommate snoring that's fine too that's what is and be and if you have to remove yourself from that room that's fine or if you throw something at him or her you can do that too your ability to do things is not diminished when you live in surrender all it means I surrender to what is I could try let's see if he wakes up if I throw something at him ok still snoring and you see that things that before would have created frustration and upset and anger and there's so many that happen in a person's life all those things that before would have created that now are simply part of the is-ness of this moment and suddenly you have a space around it ok and that space is the space of presence and so and then you get to know yourself as the spaciousness around things so to speak not the thing you are that which allows the thing to be and then to disappear and then something else to come that's the now that's the deeper meaning of now is the space in which everything happens and so the now and yourself are one and the power of now of course is the power of life of the very being that you are and when I say yourself of course I don't mean the fictitious self of the story that is form based and thought based but the deeper being that you are being itself freedom from the world ultimately and then the world becomes a very pleasant place not frustrating anymore things still come and go gain and loss happen birth and death continuously happen and that's how it is and there is an underlying peace and that peace is inseparable from who you are that's our practice this weekend and that's the way we can live our life which isn't really our life at all which is simply life living us life living through us we don't have a life because then there is me and life not possible we are life the one life in many forms that are born and die continuously the one consciousness the one life and so life can then live freely through you and it can flower and that flowering may take form also as a creation or it may remain simply as an emanation that comes through this form and that emanation one could call love not the egoic love that says I want you you stay here I need you and I want you or it says make me happy sign here on the dotted line but the true love the love that is a recognition of oneness as an emanation that's the flowering I suggest you stay for a little while until

you feel ready to move stay with the stillness that is here the sacred field the sacred sacred space until it's time to move thank you the bird is teaching much better than I could I'm sure they got it wrong when they say that Saint Francis was preaching to the birds of course he was listening to the birds they don't need preaching to such a divine sound and such a wonderful exquisite balance between stillness and sound that bird knows about balance there's always quite a long gap and then the next sound comes out of the stillness and it's always fresh and new it's never a repetition of the previous sound with this bird this is why it's so amazing and that would be enough if you had that around as your teacher what else do you need the bird is teaching the balance between form and formless that's the art of living to live in both dimensions sound and stillness form and formless things and nothingness in this teaching the dimension of stillness of the formless is emphasized because the entire civilization is lost in form in things in objects in thoughts the entire civilization is lost in that dimension of things that includes thoughts and that's why there is a particular emphasis in this teaching on that which is missing balance needs to reestablish itself because no civilization can survive without the balance between form and formless now everybody has form already more than enough that's why this teaching isn't based on knowledge or new facts interesting facts new information information because the world is full of that I mean you just any you can push any button of the many devices that you have and you get information and you're drowning in information and ultimately you see it's what is the point of it all if that's just more of that is that going to save the world more information or more things are we going to find the fullness of life through more things and greater and bigger shopping malls again form or are we going to find ourselves through improving our ability to think and analyze and solve problems analytically that were created by excessive thinking in the first place or as Carl Jung put it you cannot solve a problem on the same level of consciousness that created the problem and so what created the problem of our civilization is that humans lost touch with the formless dimension which we could also call spirit which we could call the sacred which we could call if that word were not had not been misused so much we could call God but we won't call it that and Jesus said what does it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose yourself or your soul that's really he could already see the tendency where things were going and form also includes time so we cannot deny that time has or seems to be real on the surface of life because it's everywhere as far as forms are concerned time seems to do something to the forms the life forms and it's strange it gradually grinds the forms down it erodes the forms it does something then you could some people have even looked upon time as some dreadful illness that inflicts everybody and that's one way of looking at it everybody is suffering from a lethal disease the outcome is the end of the form it's just a question of when and so you see it as my father says who is 87 now he says mirrors are not the same quality they used to be so the art is to live in this world where time seems on the one hand to be everywhere and control everything but where on the other hand time is also recognized as ultimately an illusion because if you look more deeply there is nothing there is no time there's only ever this moment and therefore that is the portal into the

formless dimension it's the the narrow gate that Jesus talks about that leads to life the narrow gate that leads to life yes it's very narrow it's only this to find it and Jesus says there are not many who find it to find it you need to roll up the scroll of your life from which your story is written past future very unclear you can't quite figure out what's at all above and you roll up people usually live carrying a burden some more than others but every carrying the burden of past me my history and how I'm hoping or fearing it's going on going which way it's going hope fear so you have this okay you're walking with myself that's the self the form based mind based time based self and that has a heaviness to it and the more you carry of time of past and future and think about it and talk about it and refer to as your sense of identity gives you your sense of self things that happened in the past and future hoping to find yourself we talked about it

[Speaker 7] (3:08:54 - 3:08:55)

and

[Speaker 1] (3:08:56 - 3:30:24)

then you're lost in form because all these are thought forms time and form go together so you need to roll up you know these old scrolls you had to roll them they were before they were books you had scrolls you rolled them you can there's a beautiful story of a vision that the woman who wrote or wrote the course in miracles that came to her as an inner voice before the whole dictation started she had a vision in which she found a scroll in an old box a very ancient scroll and as she started to unfold unroll the scroll she saw symbols on the left and other symbols on the right and she heard a voice saying if you read what's on the left you know the past and if you read what is on the right you'll know the future and she looked to the left and the right and then she rolled it back to the central panel on which was written God is and she said this is all that I'm interested in I don't want anything else that's all I want God is and then the same voice that had explained to her that is past and that is future said congratulations you made it this time so her focal point had become the present moment if her focal point had not become the present moment the spaciousness that was necessary for the wisdom to come through her out of the formless it was then given form by her mind but the spaciousness would not have been there if she had said okay that's interesting let's see I'm going to look at the future and then years later she would still be looking at the oh wow and the past is interesting too and God is the isness of now just that and this is you can use that as an image for your own life as much as possible be interested in this and that is what we called getting out of the stream of the continuity between past and future as often as possible break that make space as if you had a veil and you say this is the veil of my life in which things are written this is a fabric and then you go in there and separate it ah and then you put your head through into another dimension the way you see it in some of these films of magic and that is ah the awakening into now and as we are all we are transitional humans at this evolutionary stage for humanity many humans alive now are

transitional beings and they are dysfunctional as their manifestations of the old consciousness they are becoming more and more dysfunctional because the old consciousness that is totally identified with mind form and time that's been running human history for thousands of years is reaching the end of its lifespan it cannot survive much longer and so every human being carries the old also still inside and many humans and certainly those present here and many others are transitional beings in the sense that the old still has a momentum within them as the new is arising i call it new because ultimately it's timeless it's not new it's there's no time at all but it's let's say as i saw the name of one second hand shop was called new to you so no words can any really express ever express the exact truth you have to be allow for the fact that language is never quite right and especially is never quite right when you begin to speak of spiritual truth the formless because every word is form and ultimately can only function by expressing reflecting something in the world of form and then it becomes difficult when the language is used to express something that is beyond form and that's why jesus used parables and he never said this is the kingdom of heaven he said the kingdom of heaven is like or is a little bit like that or like that and he gives you little stories and then the form of the words as long as you don't get entangled in the words and say oh this is how it is if you allow the words to be pointers little signposts then it can work but if you say there's the truth it's not the truth the truth is not in the word and especially in spiritual discourse the truth is that to which the word points so you have to look beyond the words especially here and so we learn to bring a balance into our lives between time and timelessness between the world of things handling that situations things objects and not getting lost in things in the world of things in the world of situations in the world in the world not losing yourself in the world and that world includes not only the external world but also the world that you carry as the mind made world in the head because that one creates that one the human made world the so called external human made world and the inner state of consciousness of course one continuum the inner the outer only reflects the inner and so on the outer level for example we have a civilization that is extraordinarily noisy if somebody came from some past civilization even two hundred years back thousand years back and would arrive here in a city or even in a small town they would say what is going on this deafening noise everywhere and these the machines everywhere that make noise have I arrived in the hell realm and if they don't if they don't have the noises that are produced by machines they have to make noise just to for the sake of noise a lot of there is some good music but a lot of so called music that you hear in restaurants I don't know if it is the same here in North America hard to find a restaurant without loud music you just open the door and put your head in and you go out again and a lot of that is for the sake of making noise it is called music there are some exceptions of course some music can have a divine function too in some rare cases it still has music that comes out of the stillness that when you listen to music that came out of the stillness whoever created it or whoever is playing it or singing it it comes out of that state of consciousness and whatever then it assumes a form and yet the form has is fresh and new it has come out of that and the stillness still clings to it as a

fragrance it still emanates that even if it's sound and that's the beauty of all art true art it reflects still that state of consciousness out of it it comes and then you have a lot of pseudo art in this world where clever minds are trying to be even more clever and think let's think of something new what can we do here let's oh maybe we could do that here or that could go there that would look clever and then okay oh no let's do and then you get they call it art but it's not it lacks something it's totally trapped in form there's only manipulating old forms nothing new has come in and nothing that can lead you back to the formless which is the original reason for all art is to it's the sacred to be a portal an access point for the sacred so that when you see it or experience it you experience yourself you find in it you see yourself reflected the formless reflected shining through the form that is why it's what is true art always there is more than what you see or hear it's not just what you see or hear there is more than that and that shines through the form and that is what can happen to you what is happening to you ultimately it's not everybody's purpose to create works of art a few humans do that that is their function partly in this world but much more importantly is for you to become that work of art your whole life and your very being becomes transparent so that the formless can shine through and that happens when you are no longer totally identified with the world of form and that happens when you have access to the realm of stillness within yourself and then something emanates through the form that is not nothing to do with the form it may emanate only as a silent emanation and not assume any form as such and so that is sometimes the case with so called there have been very few in the past holy people who simply in India they've always existed in any generation in India there have always been a few holy men or women who never did anything and that's very rare for the west they say what did they create what did they do and they never did anything they just sat there and the west says what a useless existence come on get a life do a get a job and some even because people when you are trapped in form you miss perceive it completely because all you see there is a useless form sitting and they say they are parasites on society they allow themselves to be fed by other people they bring them their food they should work for a living like myself and that is when the mind that knows nothing but form looks at the form it will totally misperceive it and so that's the beauty that in India they always recognized that because they haven't completely lost touch in fact they may have gone at some point too far in the opposite direction so that they lost interest in form because they went into being more now India is becoming western you read about India you move to other they're all into computers these days and cell phones and that's fine too but the question is where is finding a balance I was totally lost in like most people completely lost in form and then a shift happened and I lost the balance and I became completely lost in the formless we can't really be lost in the formless it's just a way of putting it because the formless is essentially who you are and yet from a normal perspective it looked as if I had lost it because there was somebody who had a promising career and suddenly just sits around on park benches not doing anything anymore just being and tasting continuously the sweetness of being of simply the beauty the sweetness of being alive the joy of simply being and then looking upon

the world and seeing it reflected in all life forms reflected the joy of being in the trees and the birds and even the humans running around like mad and knowing that deep down there there's also the very same being and it's beautiful and so from an external perspective the ability to handle forms was gone to manipulate the world of form was gone for a while and then gradually had to reestablish itself so I could do again and of course be at the same time and that is the it is not the destiny of each one of you to move so deeply into being that you no longer capable of handling the world of form around you that happens occasionally but it tends to happen more to those people who those few who experience a dramatic shift from one to the other and then for a while they're gone that's of course the beautiful the beautiful sutra of Buddha gate gate gone gone gone to the farthest shore and yet it seems it is our destiny here while we are still in form to balance form and formulas here and that's why we are here and for most of you the transition to a news and what is the new state of consciousness that's arising it is the state that is balanced the two dimensions the manifested and the unmanifested balanced in a human being and that is such a radical transformation that when a certain number of humans live in that way so they become what before was a work of art you become the work of art you become that which is transparent to the formulas the divine and then that will change the entire world the way what you experience as the man human made world will be changed completely it is not necessary to speculate now what is the world going to look like when enough humans live in the new consciousness that's not important now the important thing is for us to enter that new state and then what that does to your story who knows how that changes the story the way in which your life unfolds in time what you do out here how that affects where you live what you do and so on you cannot predict nor do you need to predict that are you going to become a great artist are you going to win Wimbledon are you and of course bear in mind that great artists and the tennis players they are not enlightened masters they have access to that which is greater than the limited human mind in the small field of their activity and most of them when they go back into normal life away from there where they have mastery they are just as mad as everybody else and sometimes even more mad because sometimes the mind made entity gets in there and looks at what they did and says I did that that was me the greatest illusion and then of course it feels very special the ego then derives its it identifies with whatever came out of the state of no ego and says I did that and then begins to believe what other people are saying about you and that you are the greatest because they all they project their images of specialness onto you and then oh the great pop star whatever and the and the the great pop stars also they have the when they compose their songs or some of them where there is there's even a glimpse of aliveness and freshness yes there's something there and then the the personality the person the person comes back the moment they step back from the act of creation or the performance they step back and there's the old personality and sometimes it's a dreadful burden for some ability that comes from the non-personal realm to be integrated into the person and they just can't

[Speaker 6] (3:30:24 - 3:30:24)

do it

[Speaker 1] (3:30:24 - 4:01:02)

it's totally misperceived just as the world misperceives it and then they believe themselves to be very special and there comes a huge conflict between power that comes out of the formless and the limited person that misinterprets it and claims something out of that and the magic that comes from the formless realm into your life is what when you look at our civilization it seems to be gone completely because the civilization is almost totally not sacred it is profane it is a dreary burdensome structure that humans have created when you look at the mainstream civilization it's and so so many humans no matter what country you go to are they seem to be tired they are weary there's a there's a weariness that they carry and the civilization is grinding them down another day of dreary activity of pointless running around and even those who are still running around they know deep down it's pointless what is the point and you ask the big direct executives in companies where are you going why are you running around like mad and they can't give you an answer except that well we are expanding the organization is expanding we are swallowing up other organizations and that's our reason for being is to to grow to get bigger it's to accumulate more and so it's all this is why we are and it's totally meaningless activity and so there are many reasons why the entire civilization is reaching a point of collapse and one is that the humans who are still sustaining it they can't carry the burden of their self created structures anymore the over complicated world absurd complexity for the sake of complexity that they have created and they cannot carry their own burden of their own creation anymore mind created just a reflection of their state of consciousness in which there is no gap in the stream of one form after another one thought after another the voice in the head that never stops speaking becomes a civilization that is obsessed with form that is obsessed with things and therefore knows nothing of that which you could say is the most important dimension of human existence the sacred the stillness the formless the divine all these have become meaningless in our civilization and yet many humans are beginning to realize what's happening and so there is in many a search for something else and that number of humans is growing every day and that's the beauty of it so each one of us here is part of the transformation of consciousness that's happening on the planet it's not going to happen it is happening if it were not happening you could not even sit here it would be intolerable to sit here and yet there may be something in you that's the old consciousness that doesn't want to be here you may occasionally feel that arises there's something that doesn't even understand what is being said that hears only the sound of the words it can't go to where the words point so you get stuck with the form the sound stuck with the thought and there's presence stillness stillness well you haven't actually explained what you mean by stillness so this is a good example where the word is only the pointer and then you have to jump off the word stillness points to

stillness it's not something to be believed in and the stillness of course is already in you it is not something that we need to create here we need to bring about by being doing the right things and then eventually we'll become still follow a certain course of a recipe if you do a b c and d you will finally become still that's very seductive but you have given yourself something to do before you can be still which means before you can find yourself and be yourself that is the problem of every method every spiritual method not that I would outright condemn all methods but the danger with any method is that it gives you it gives you time it says okay you will arrive and find yourself why not find yourself already why create something between yourself and yourself so the stillness that is already at this moment in you fully fully the stillness out of which the thoughts come every thought comes out and then goes back in sense perceptions get you a little closer to it when you perceive and do not label it whatever you perceive you just let it be then there is the perception the form and there is the one could almost say that this is a limited analogy no analogies are that great but you can say there is the canvas on which the perception is painted there is a background of spacious stillness that's yourself that's the consciousness that you are formless not the conditioned consciousness that is the forms in your mind thoughts they are there too but simply being able to sense that which underlies whatever you perceive or think or feel Gurdjieff put it the Russian teacher who lived at the beginning of the 20th century put it like he called it self-remembrance and of course that can be misinterpreted as if you had to think about ok let me remember who I am my name is such and such no he meant to remember not even to remember words are never right to know the knower to know who knows this who in a dream let's say you dream and then you wake up and say it was only a dream it was unreal of course it wasn't totally unreal because something within the forms that arose in the dream must have been there to enable these forms to exist there must have been a consciousness in which this dream unfolded and so in other words there must have been a dreamer of the dream as the consciousness in which it happened and that is the timeless and formless dimension without which forms would not exist and so our normal existence is very much like a dream because just like a dream everything dissolves fairly quickly every situation everything is and even the seemingly solid reality that surrounds us is not really that solid first of all it's there's nothing solid it just appears solid it's just energy fields in motion and they're not going to remain in that form for very long if you could look more deeply you could see everything is already dissolving it's a temporary it comes into form and dissolves the bodies that are sitting here are already dissolving even this table if we look in 200 years it'll still look more or less the same but if we could speed up on camera what happens to this room of a period of 3000 years which is very little on a global scale then you would see that even all seemingly solid objects are crumbling within one minute you would see everything becoming dust and then disappearing and it would be a shocking and liberating thing to watch a film like that that shows you what is actually happening to the seemingly solid world around you and deep down that is a it's a liberating thing when you see how short-lived every form is because what is it in you that sees that the short-lived nature of all forms and you witness that

that is the aware presence from the stillness you see that and actually you become more still the more you see how short-lived every form is and you don't run away from that fact just stay with let's see how death how important it is to face death in your life which is everywhere which is what our civilization is trying to hide continuously there is no death don't don't never look at a dead body because that's this just isn't done so there are people who have never seen a dead body and you certainly if it's not a close relative you would not be able to see a dead body because the civilization needs to hide death because it's the most threatening thing to somebody who is totally identified with the world of form death is the most dreadful thing and you must not think about it or talk about it and so whenever you are faced with death there is and even just watching it and when the table dissolves that's death too if you saw it over a period of three thousand years and saw it crumbling within a minute the entire room and everything in it goes or you would see a human being being born somebody showed me a clip apparently it was from an ad from some country it takes one minute a baby is coming out of the womb and shoots out like a cannonball into the sky and screams all the time but as the baby travels up into the sky it already begins to grow and grows and goes higher and higher and finally reaches full maturity and then starts going downhill and is still screaming and the closer and then becoming an old man as he approaches the ground hair is falling out and finally the last scream and he lands in the grave and it says underneath life is short now whether the people who made that film knew that they were making a spiritual film I think I don't know I think they were selling beer or something like that but that is deeply spiritual when you see how quickly everything dissolves and you don't run away from that fact and this that again what I mentioned yesterday the Old Testament prophet who said vanity of vanities all is vanity to see that is liberating because this now if everything were permanent it's the same as saying if the entire world were blue there would be no blue because you couldn't differentiate it the color blue wouldn't exist now if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it because you only know it if there's something that's different so I just give you this to consider and not to think about to consider there's something in you that recognizes the impermanent nature of all life forms and that is the formless and the more you realize the impermanence of all forms the more the form you're aware of the formless in yourself but you and the formless are ultimately one so when you say you are aware of the formless we're already making a little mistake that's created by language what we what it really is that you you are more fully yourself you are more aware of yourself not as two but as one you become more self-aware awareness becomes aware of itself and there was a question here written by somebody who probably doesn't like public speaking just this later we may have some more questions in the now sometimes I'm aware of expanding what is this it seems to be awareness itself if I am aware of awareness duality which am I good question I am aware this is what it seems like when we talk about it but that's not how it is it's only when we put it into language we formulate a sentence which has a subject and an object but really when you become aware of awareness which really is the secret to a balanced human life to become aware of awareness and then also the forms but what does that

mean who is becoming aware of awareness the language that we use here creates the illusion of duality so it would be much better if we rephrase that and we say the awareness that I am becomes aware of itself no duality the awareness that is the essence of who I am becomes aware of itself and that is a miraculous beautiful incredible thing what traditionally has been called self-realization becoming aware awareness becoming aware of itself as simple stillness but every word reduces it again to something that is far greater and of course there is a sense of expansion because you are no longer trapped as the questioner mentions expanding you are no longer trapped your consciousness is no longer trapped in the form that's the incarnation the incarnation of consciousness into form and the realization of consciousness as the formless and so some spiritual traditions speak of reincarnating many times and you say you reincarnate again and again until you wake up until you realize who you are beyond form and that is true you are born again and again but I want to make it not as something that I want you to believe in but to make it true in your experience and to make it true in your experience all you need to look at is today how you reincarnate today now how does that happen how do I reincarnate today I thought it just happens once in a lifetime you know the sticker that the born again Christians have on their cars says born again Christians and the Buddhists have on their car born again and again and again how do you reincarnate today and how many times do you reincarnate today every time you lose you lose yourself in a thought or an emotion or something that happens out there which also of course you experience as thought and emotion let's say you lose yourself in a situation says this is important you must deal with this ok what's going on here let's deal with and then you lose yourself in the reactive pattern and in the mental interpretation oh this is awful you must do something oh let's do oh oh whatever it is you identify with a form every thought that arises in your mind that grips you completely there's a sense of self in it it's unconscious of course your sense of self means your sense of identity gets mixed up with the form of that thought or the emotion and so you're completely incarnated in the in the form that arises in your life and so humans go through life not knowing not realizing that every day they reincarnate many times they lose themselves continuously in forms they react to the forms and they're totally in the reaction there is not an awareness in the background of ok this is what's going on so there's no space there's only form there's no stillness there's only noise and that means being compulsively reincarnate reincarnating every day many times and even while you sit alone in your room and you start thinking about oh oh oh oh oh oh oh if you were talking out aloud the voice in your head that you identify with everybody would recognize it as insane but then on the other hand I don't know then what if I do that I wonder what happens if I go what oh that would be dreadful if that happens I just hope that the oh no I hadn't thought of that before and you reincarnate continuously into some new thought form and so of course that's why Buddhists talk about coming to the end of reincarnation simply means not losing yourself in form again and again and again and it doesn't mean you reject all forms some spiritual traditions go a little bit far in their attempt to find the formless dimension they say don't even look at anything beautiful

because it's not going to be around for very long it's all dissolving already don't even look at the flower certainly don't they tell the monks never look at a beautiful woman you must not look and so they go because you would reincarnate in many ways you lose yourself in the attraction and that's dangerous so a monk mustn't even he can't hand a woman something because it's dangerous he has to he puts it on the table and she picks it up because otherwise there could be some indirect contact now the idea behind it may be a good one that you mustn't lose yourself in form and yet to reject the world of form is perhaps again losing balance again in the other direction say okay all beauty is dust because whatever I look upon is already dissolving the flower that looks beautiful today tomorrow will be gone with it and so in some traditions the entire world of form is rejected completely now occasionally that seems to work mostly it doesn't but here and there some people realize this even within that tradition but that probably doesn't have anything to do with the tradition they would have realized even if they were sitting in an office they were ready so it is always problematic if that which is a natural process of disidentification is forced into an artificially created structure it may work it works if there is a human being there who can who embodies the two dimensions who embodies the awakened state then it can work in many cases there is no human being there is only the tradition and then usually it doesn't get you there so the form not rejecting forms outright I work with to see that in every form something is hiding that is one with the essence of who you are and it is not just something you can think about it is if you anything that you look upon and you are still enough or listen to the bird whatever it may be anything that you can be with in stillness so that you sense yourself as the still space in which that object or that being is perceived then you sense that that essence that you know sense yourself to be is also there in that being and even in inanimate objects even a table has being has presence some people need to take acid for the first time to realize that the table is alive too but this is not what I recommend here all you need to be is present with it and truly be alert and still and then look the moment you call it table you are under the illusion that now you know what it is you don't know at all it is a mystery it remains totally unknown and mysterious just because you put a label on it doesn't mean now you know you just have a thought in your head or a sound comes out of your mouth and you say that's what it is and then you cannot go deeper into it because you get stuck at the label you hit the label and then you are stuck oh that's a table ok what's the next thing you never can go deeper into anything you only hit one label after another ok and therefore it's always a search ok because you only hit the surface of things you always then immediately the mind says ok I've done that I know what that is where is the next thing there is this continuous looking for the next thing because you can never stay with one thing where the depth that is in everything reveals itself to you and that's the restlessness of our civilization that always asks what's next what's next and you already see even in relatively young children these days that continuous need for the new stimulus they can't sit still for a moment they just ok because they are used they are addicted to the next thing some new mental stimulus because they live in a civilization that is totally on the only on the surface of things like

completely in depth so now you can bring in depth even into your perceptions of things perception is much closer to the unmanifested or to being than thought thought is far removed it's an abstract you get when you for many people to become present when they realize oh I'm lost I'm lost I'm lost in some problem some world of problems where's the problem now and they wake up and the first thing they notice is sense perceptions around them and they hadn't been aware of that at all because all their attention was in the thoughts and suddenly they look at the floor their hand the table the light

[Speaker 7] (4:01:02 - 4:01:03)

oh

[Speaker 1] (4:01:03 - 4:15:30)

and in the looking there's a stillness in fact there is the strange thing is you cannot even look at anything without stillness because even the person who labels things compulsively which is almost everybody there's always a moment when they first let's just talk for a moment about the visual sense but it includes all sense perceptions there's always a first moment when you first look at something a tree a flower a table anything there is a one second or so in which there is stillness and then the mind interprets it or labels it but if you can catch yourself when you first look at something there is a brief moment of non-labeling otherwise you wouldn't even see it and then it recedes almost one could say the sense perception immediately loses its sharpness and aliveness because after one or two seconds the mental label replaces the aliveness that was there dead and then you look at the next thing or you listen to a bird and there is a moment of pure listening and then after two seconds the mind says something oh that must be a black bird or what's the name of I can't remember gone or whatever the mind says about it so if you can catch yourself whenever something new enters your awareness whether it's auditory or visual tactile smelling tasting even relatively undeveloped senses from contemporary humans there you can be there and be conscious of that first moment when there is no labeling there is the stillness and the aliveness and if you become conscious of that you may find that it becomes longer you don't need to automatically label it and so the stillness that is the background to sense perceptions becomes faster it's always fast but you didn't know it and so that is how another way in which the stillness in you expands so to speak everything is so to speak about stillness the stillness in you expands and then more and more you move about your life not just when you are passive passively perceiving but also bringing it into activity that that state of consciousness so to speak that is stillness flows into often also into what you do so that you notice it's you can actually do things better with if they are done in a state of still presence than if you are thinking what you want to achieve through this movement where you want to get to in the next moment no you're just present with so there's a stillness to what you perceive and there's a stillness that flows into the action and the action may be simple walking across the room opening a window turning on the tap

feeling the water listening to the water looking out of the window in the morning you open the curtains and why it's simply a deep seated habit to immediately call this day something and say oh no not another grey day no just let it be and then there's immediately a depth to everything that wasn't there when you didn't you bring in this so called new consciousness into everyday situations and you break the continuity of the story then intelligence comes in more and more also love because the only way love can come into your life is through space not through form love has no form and again in the egoic state love gets entangled in form so you think you need only this form you love not realising that true love is the recognition of the formless in the other which is the recognition of yourself in the other and that is inseparable from looking upon the other in stillness without a form arising and saying this is who she is or what she is and if forms still arise in your mind recognise it's only a thought it's not who that human being is and then what beauty if you can recognise the formless in form and first you can recognise it in natural things very easily much more easily because natural things are less challenging than humans humans are were natural once but now they have become whatever the world of nature you approach first of all and relate through stillness and presence more and more and then gradually you bring it into human relationships easy with humans you meet for the first time let them be and as you listening vital to be able to listen to another human it doesn't mean that the words all your attention is on the words when you listen we are only listening almost as an analogy there is a field of attention of still attention that flows out towards that human being one could say you give him or her space and then that person may be speaking words arise in the space but you are there as the spaciousness that allows words to come you are there as a field of aware presence and then words may come out of your mouth suddenly and that is very different from so called normal human interaction that is all completely mind dominated to be still with another human being while you listen and sense yourself as the awareness while you listen so some of your attention is on the words and some of your attention is now with challenging humans get into your body so that you can be present with your entire energy field every cell of the body is present as you listen then you are because humans can be very challenging they want because they are dominated by mind they want you to contribute to their mental structures the drama whatever it is their pain body may be active everybody here probably knows about pain body which is another way of identifying with form the old emotion that arises slight trigger triggers pain body a pain body episode pain body being the old stored up emotion from the past human suffering human pain that hasn't gone away that is partly personal and partly collective humanity ultimately in a larger sense it's all just human pain it's not ultimately personal at all and that is a little entity energetic entity that lives in you sometimes dormant and sometimes active and sometimes half dormant half asleep with one eye open waiting for an opportunity I'm just for a trigger so that it can come up and the trigger could be your remark your partner makes are you accusing me of being no I didn't say that yes you did and then we start the drama that awakens the partner's pain body and that's supposed to happen they feed each other totally you totally reincarnate

into old pain you live it it lives through you not knowing that you are going through another reincarnation and you may be a Buddhist and having thoughts in your head that you want to arrive at the end of the cycle of reincarnations and that some abstract edifice in your mind and you don't know that while you are fighting with your wife you are reincarnating at this very moment I must get back to my meditation I don't meditate an hour a day I'll have to reincarnate again and again and again while you're doing it now oh so this is one of the most frequent ways in which people reincarnate is to into the old emotion that wants to feed on the experience of more pain and it pretends to be you you identify with it it occupies your entire space and you feed on the other person's reaction and you love it not when I say you I mean the pain body at that moment there's a mistaking you the pain body for who you are that's reincarnation and then finally it subsides and then the next episode will be in a week's time just like the soap operas or it will feed on your mind if you have no partner it will feed on your thinking how dreadful my life is what he did to me she did to me they did to me the world politicians people whatever the mind can think of that's a negative thought the pain body loves it that is the the pain body is the addiction to negativity that humans carry and it's a little entity an energy form and all that is required is for you to see to recognize it then you don't reincarnate into it anymore and even if you were reincarnated it is possible in the middle of negative thinking or in the middle of a drama with your spouse to suddenly know what's happening that means some of your consciousness has has stepped out of the form and is there as pure awareness before it was totally trapped in the form and then when you suddenly see what's happening that means what's happened there some consciousness has stepped out of the incarnation and is there as pure consciousness watching and there you are the angry entities screaming oh look at that and then it can't it can't go on for that much longer because when there's when there's awareness there presence which is simply the still watcher then it it can't very well renew itself much longer because it needs your unawareness it needs your complete identification with it to really renew itself so then it quickly subsides it goes hmm

[Speaker 6] (4:15:35 - 4:15:35)

okay

[Speaker 1] (4:15:36 - 4:28:43)

well that was good at least I woke up in the middle of it sometimes you wake up afterwards there it was too late but it's not really too late because at least I'm awake now next time maybe I can catch it a little earlier and then next time it comes oh there it is and you can sometimes see how a little event can be used as an excuse by the pain body just a tiny thing going wrong somebody slams the door on your face and there's a reaction far greater than the relatively insignificant event and that's because the pain body was waiting for something so shining the light of attention of consciousness on it is all that's needed then you don't reincarnate completely into it every time and renew the

old cycle it's always the same always the same if you're not present in thirty years time you'll still have the same episodes with your wife or husband or maybe a new wife and a new husband but it'll be the same and the strange thing is you look for somebody saying you get to divorce finally I can't live with this pain body anymore I mean the one that I live with you still have your own and so you get divorced and say okay now my next husband or wife I'm going to choose somebody who doesn't have a pain body who's conscious and then you meet somebody who looks conscious they've done spiritual work for twenty five years and then you start living together and within about four weeks you will encounter an aspect to that pain body that wasn't supposed to be there so that's the challenge of the pain body whether you are in a relationship or not it'll be there relationships are good opportunity because that's the favorite playground of pain body renewal but if the pain body doesn't have the relationship it'll just use your mind that works too so watch for that because there's a momentum there that's very strong because it's been there's such a huge amount of human pain collective human pain on this planet built up over many many thousands of years and really all that your pain body is or it looks personal it's really human pain although something in your so called personal life may have added to it but really it is basically impersonal just as the movement of thought is basically impersonal the emotions are human emotions the thoughts are all thoughts that are being thought by the collective human mind and people think that's me but it is impersonal it's just when you identify it it gives the illusion that of being personal of being a person there you are being thought by the collective mind and so well where is the personal then the strange thing is that stillness isn't personal either presence stillness is not personal and yet it is essentially the beingness that you are but it's not personal personal means a little thing that there's me and the others so ultimately there's nothing personal neither the unconsciousness that identifies with forms nor when the the consciousness arises is not personal either and yet the essence of who you are the I am that is nothing to do with person but it gets mixed up with the personal the forms that the person identifies with that make up the person as you know person is the word comes from latin it means persona the mask that you wear and that is are the roles that you play when you interact with other humans as long as you identified with mind and emotion you play the roles that are personal you play the the script in your mind the conditioning of your mind again and again and again born again and again and again until you've had enough and then you're fed up with the suffering that that entails and the readiness comes to step out of that and that's the end of reincarnation before we have a few questions there may not be any questions left that would be good too can you listen to the sound of the bell at the same time as you're aware of the awareness that is listening in other words aware of yourself as the presence in which the sound happens and then all that's left is spaciousness presence form and formless so even while you listen to the form which is the sound follow the sound as it slowly dies down into formlessness that is death too when the sound slowly dies down when I ring this bell again after the Royal Air Force has all passed follow the sound until it disappears that means the sound dies death means a form is dissolving dissolves and

then what's left is formless consciousness you can do the same with your breath that's an old meditation method the simplest one one of the simplest doesn't really give you time to observe your breath the Buddha recommended that is perhaps the most direct meditation method because it doesn't give you time unless the meditator comes in as a conceptual identity and says I must get better at observing my breath when you observe how your breath moves out the end of the out-breath is also a little death and there's a moment of stillness any ending is helpful in that way because any ending is the ending of any form and it's always some kind of death when you accept it fully it's an opening into the formless even the ending of our little retreat can be like that because that too is a form and you could say oh what a pity this form is dissolving and you want to hang on to the form a recipe for unhappiness not realizing that the very reason why this gathering is meaningful is that it takes you beyond form so the more you welcome all the endings in your life goodbye form is going the more the formless is there in your life the egoic entity works the opposite way it hates it wants to think oh no I want to keep this but it's going going gone everything if you're old enough that you can see the death of this physical form approaching that can be very beautiful too to feel to accept that but not as a thought oh I'm going to die soon no let it push you into being present just that if any questions arise please ask one person there I think the microphone will travel to you

[Speaker 4] (4:28:49 - 4:28:51)

you use a lot of

[Speaker 2] (4:28:51 - 4:28:59)

humor in your a lot of laughter in your presentation and there appears to be a lot of laughter in you

[Speaker 4] (4:29:00 - 4:29:14)

I have this sense that once the humorous thing is said and the laughter begins that that too is a porthole into presence can you speak about that

[Speaker 1] (4:29:15 - 4:37:37)

the the humor arises spontaneously when you look at really whenever this humor arises we are looking at the world of form and see that the normal existence which is identification with form is a form of madness and when you see it in your own life the seeing is free in that moment of freedom from that old conditioned form there is a spontaneous relaxation and that produces the laughter so it's enormously liberating the more you laugh at the world of form not in a malicious way but in a free way to see the forms do not they pretend all the forms pretend that they are deadly serious the world wants to be taken really every situation says I'm so serious and if you have no inauspiciousness then indeed every situation is dreadfully serious and so the absolute

seriousness of the world of form disappears when you are rooted in the formless and that means laughter arises more frequently even in relatively unlikely situations and it does not mean that you have no empathy or compassion it's sometimes when I used to see people individually they would come to me and usually they begin by telling their story at that time I just let them tell their story and sometimes while they were telling and sometimes it was a very unhappy story very unhappy and sometimes while I was listening there was a smile on my face and it just I don't know how it got there and sometimes the people who were telling suddenly stopped and said what are you smiling about are you laughing at me no and then I found it hard to explain there was a time when I didn't have really many words to explain so I found it hard to explain why the smile was there not smiling at anything they said smiling because I recognized both within myself and within them underneath the story I recognized the dimension in which that story is relatively meaningless I recognized that underneath the story you are absolutely fine I recognized the dimension in you where you are just was never touched by the unhappy story who you are and because I recognized that the smile came and so but quite a few times people got angry because they thought I was smiling at their story or at them it was it wasn't taken all that seriously anymore just as my own story lost its seriousness it continued in some way playing itself out but it wasn't serious business anymore it doesn't mean you don't honor the world of form it doesn't mean that you have become callous towards things no not at all there is you still here as this form identity you still carry a form also so you can empathize with the suffering that arises in anyone who is totally identified with form and yet that is one aspect of compassion that you know full well what it means to be trapped in form is is suffering and I've been through it I know what I know the suffering so there's the empathy on the level of form of suffering but there's also the recognition of that which is already beyond suffering in me in you it's one and there come the two aspects of compassion on the one hand we share being trapped in this form seemingly on the other hand we also share the timeless and formless dimension of existence where we are already free and you bring the two together and that's true compassion because true compassion doesn't just mean you weep when the other person weeps you weep also you may weep but underneath the weeping there's joy the joy that knows of the formless that knows that you are in your essence indestructible not as an abstract idea but as a feeling realization so to speak so humor is a wonderful thing and I I'm sure that Jesus and other teachers all had a lot of humor too all the teachers did and just the the disciples later on said oh we mustn't put that joke in that doesn't that that doesn't look serious enough beware of any spiritual teacher who is deadly serious because even the Zen the Zen masters who look dreadfully serious they only look like that there's an enormous amount of humor inside them that's hidden in all the Zen stories and the way they deal with people so they just look like that but if you look into their eyes or if you see a drawing done by a great artist of a Zen master you see underneath their perhaps frightening demeanor there is a softness also and there's a gentle smile hidden somewhere there and then of course you have the beautiful image traditionally all Buddha images have a slight smile this is the

Buddha smile a very slight hint of a smile that comes with knowing yourself knowing the essence of being and then you have the images influenced by Taoism in China of the fat Buddha they are wonderful there's this man with a huge belly toothless in many cases or just one tooth left and his belly is huge and he's continuously laughing and many people have that at home in China and nowadays in the West also and it's wonderful to see whenever you think you have a problem just look at him and he's laughing not at you he's laughing not because he despises the world or is callous towards human suffering he's laughing because he's rooted within in the formless and so it's a wonderful image you can also practice a laughing meditation that's I haven't done that yet and that frees up a lot of rigid structures inside but here the laughing happens spontaneously and it's wonderful okay one there and then we go there okay oh thank you can a fool realize his enlightenment thank you can a form realize

[Speaker 6] (4:37:37 - 4:37:38)

a fool

[Speaker 1] (4:37:38 - 4:49:38)

a fool silly person oh thank you wonderful question there are some wonderful images fool is a very ancient mythological figure the tarot card of the fool and so on now by fool let's say we mean someone whose mental capacities are undeveloped I would say somebody who is not trapped in the usual structures of compulsive thinking not because he or she has transcended compulsive thinking but has not arrived at compulsive thinking and in that sense that human being is already enlightened because he has not it's not the enlightenment that we are addressing here but that state of not yet being trapped in thought has many similarities with the enlightened state one could say he doesn't need enlightenment because in his own way he already is enlightened in modern contemporary mythology which is films there is a beautiful example of that in the figure of Forrest Gump the film somebody whose mental capacities are undeveloped but who lives in many ways just like an enlightened person would live first of all he doesn't have an ego everything that comes everything he needs naturally comes to him his life unfolds naturally he doesn't struggle for anything everything comes at the right moment and he achieves he even does great things but never says I did that because the I hasn't arisen yet he has to go to Vietnam and even there wherever he goes he is a force for good even when he has to go to the war in Vietnam he saves many people he is a great hero and he doesn't look at himself as a great hero because he doesn't have a mental image of myself having done that he just explains that's what happened I did that and so on and so in many ways he is already enlightened and you can say he doesn't need enlightenment because he is already there for us we can't go back there he doesn't really need to go through thinking he is fine it seems to be the destiny of some humans to be connected and there may be a few remaining civilizations remnants of ancient civilizations where humans live in oneness with nature and oneness with each other and

they don't need the Buddha they already just as an animal there are some dogs or cats that I sometimes meet in some cases they have suffered a lot or they are very old and they have reached the enlightenment of the dog or cat being the old cat who cannot be bothered anymore with catching birds because the cat knows it's pointless anyway they're too old and so they go around and they're just completely there and the old dog there are beings who seem to have completely fulfilled the purpose of their existence in that form and have found the connectedness with the formless within they have the form has fulfilled its purpose and the connectedness is there this is not it is not our destiny to to return we are all we have been or are or most of us halfway stuck in the human the human mind so there's no way of going back we cannot become fools again and yet when you go beyond thinking from the point of view of mind it often appears that you no longer know anything so in that way we also become fools from the point of view of conceptual thought and there are many similarities with the way that an enlightened person lives who has transcended thought which is no longer trapped in thinking to somebody who has not yet gone through the evolutionary stage of being trapped in thinking didn't have to for some reason consciousness flowered there through that form and that's beautiful for us it's transcending thought and then becoming a fool again yes one could say and yet we don't become forest gum there is a knowing that comes when you have transcended thought there is an awareness that wasn't there before in the natural state it's a regaining of the natural state but the regaining of the natural state that also all ancient civilizations speak of the myth of the golden age that exists in India in almost every civilization you have the myth that there was a time when humans lived in peace and happily the world was a kind of paradise you have the same myth expressed in the beginning of the bible so there must be an ancient truth there there is a natural state that humans lost those humans who didn't lose it don't need it they are fine but it is the destiny the evolutionary destiny of consciousness is for humans to lose it and then to regain it and that's where we are and so in some ways you will look to humans who are still trapped in the same and you will find that they are still in the same state and you will are still trapped the same state so you don't need to seek a specialist in form anymore so what a freedom that comes to us now of not needing to be special anymore to get some sense of who you are to become ordinary you have that beautifully expressed in the Taoist sages the whole Tao Te Ching the Chinese book of wisdom is all an expression of ordinariness to be ordinary not to project yourself and wanting needing to be someone but happy to be no one and that looks quite foolish from the outside and people may look upon you as nobody and that's wonderful the only regret is not really regret I have about the power of now that became so well known and with it the being that gave it birth no more just is the projection of specialness whereas there was such beauty in being totally ordinary and nobody doubted that I was ordinary well a few people said you must go and see him he is so ordinary just to be to be with the just to live with the present moment see what you nothing could be more ordinary than just to live aligned with whatever is here now that's all you ever have to do it's pretty ordinary just this the famous Zen saying chopping wood carrying water it's expressed in that it's a

very profound Zen saying this is meant to encapsulate the whole of Zen existence chopping wood carrying water two of the most ordinary activities at that time when people did that in our cases will be something else most people well don't chop wood well perhaps some people still do it's beautiful to be just just that whatever you happen to be doing at this moment there's no more than this moment chopping wood ah carrying water just that peace aliveness no interference of mind that says how many more weeks or years do I have to chop this wood if I don't do something now I'll still be stuck in ten years time chopping wood the illusion of time is back here but only on the external level not in here on the external level the clock keeps ticking or whatever modern clocks do this is not the end there is no end but this is not the end even on the level of form after our little break I will meet with you again here in about 30 so called minutes and we will sit together just in silence for a little while unless something else happens thank you music

[Speaker 3] (4:51:25 - 4:51:34)

It is our great great honor at Unity FM here at Unity to welcome our special guest today Ekhart Tolle.

[Speaker 1] (4:51:35 - 4:51:36)

Thank you. Welcome.

[Speaker 3] (4:51:36 - 4:52:35)

Applause Well, one of our co-founders, Myrtle Fillmore, this has been her vision and Charles's vision that and to have you here is such an honor. One of the things that she wrote, there's a letter that she wrote, is the oldest handwritten letter that Myrtle has been found by Myrtle Fillmore and in it, this is from 1891, and I brought this quote because it speaks so much to what you talk about in both of your books. She says, My dear, you ask why you do not enter into the understanding you so desire.

I will tell you, you are already in it, but you think you have some great thing to do to get there. The kingdom of God is within you. All you need to do is be still and know.

[Speaker 1] (4:52:36 - 4:52:38)

Yes, that's right.

[Speaker 3] (4:52:38 - 4:52:41)

So that would be, what would you like to add to that?

[Speaker 1] (4:52:44 - 5:02:21)

Well, the human mind has been conditioned over thousands of years to seek fulfillment

elsewhere in space and time, and especially in time, so the human mind has been conditioned to look to the future or the next moment. Future sounds a little abstract. If we say the next moment, then we can actually feel what that means.

It always looks to the next moment, or most of the time, for fulfillment, completion. And in this way, the human mind, the conditioning of the human mind denies life because the only place where life takes place, the only place where life happens is in the present moment now, and outside the now there is no life. And even past and future don't actually exist outside human thought forms.

Now this may sound a little bit difficult at first to believe because past and future seem so real, but all you have to, this is not a philosophical exercise, it's easier than that, all you have to ask yourself is whether you've ever experienced past or future. And then if you look closely, you realize all you ever experienced was now. And when it happened, it was now because it's only in the space of now where anything can happen.

And when the future comes, it can only come as the now. So past and future are thought forms. They may be necessary on a practical level here.

We can make appointments and get together here at this particular time. But when it goes beyond practical, then they actually represent a great limitation when they take over our lives. Then time, past and future I call time, time then takes over our consciousness.

And so this is the time-bound state of consciousness that most people are possessed by. And it is an essential aspect of the egoic consciousness. The ego lives in and through time, ego being the false mind-made sense of self.

And so it comes as a surprise to people when they realize, well, it's actually true. My life is always now. And it's never not now.

And never will be not now. It never has been. And that is not just an idea that you add to your mind, the fact that life is always now.

This is almost like a little powerful pointer. It's always now. And really, that almost stops your mind.

If you really get that, to experience the truth of that statement, you have to step beyond the mind. Because by continuing to think analytically, is it actually true that there's only the now? Let me think.

It's a pointer that takes you, when you truly experience the reality of that, actually takes you into the now. And then there's an opening inside, there's a space that opens up inside, and you say, this is it? And what is this?

You can't quite at first define what this is. But all you know for the time being is this is life. Life itself is experienced now.

And so, for most people, now is what happens in the now. And that's why people believe that there are many different moments. Every hour consists of many different moments.

Every day consists of many moments. But if you look more closely, of course, there are not many moments. There's only ever this moment.

And the reason why people believe there are many moments is because they confuse the now with what happens in the now. What happens, of course, changes continuously. The now itself, however, is something that is, the moment we define it through words, of course, we limit it.

And yet, knowing that words are not quite it, or words can only point to it, we can continue to talk for a little bit about the now. So, the now then is the space in which everything happens, or the light in which everything appears. And the light in which things appear and disappear, they come.

This is how everything continues to change in life. The impermanence of that the Buddha speaks of. Everything continuously changes.

It comes into the light of now. But the essence of every experience is the light of consciousness, which is the space of now. So the secret of now is that it is the formless foundation of all manifested life.

It is the unmanifested, formless dimension in which the manifested appears. And in essence, you are that light. And knowing that yourself as that is not done through thinking.

It is not a thought that you add to your mind and say, OK, I'm light. OK, now I know it. You can only know yourself as the light if thought stops, even if only for this moment.

And you sense that underneath all the things that happen, sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, feelings, there remains the substratum, which is the space of consciousness itself, which we could also call the stillness. Every word only shows you a tiny aspect of it. It's not it.

It's stillness, and it's vaster than stillness. It's consciousness, but even that limits it because it's only a word. So finding that space in yourself, and this is what the quote is about, you can only find that space in yourself now because essentially it is the now.

So who you are at the deepest level is inseparable from the now. And so that's the deepest meaning of now. And it's a realization.

Just one glimpse is enough to change your life. It doesn't mean that the time-bound

consciousness won't take you over again. It will probably happen.

But you've had the glimpse, that is the initiation of the awakening process. And anybody who can see the truth of this must already have had the glimpse. Or in the moment of words like these being spoken, some people at that moment have the glimpse and wake up.

And so you realize the essence of yourself has nothing to do with the form of yourself, the body, whatever thoughts go through your mind, whatever emotions you have. That's fine. That's a level of form.

I call it the human part. But we are human beings. Human is form.

Being is formless. Most humans know only the human part and identify totally with the human part, which is the physical form, the thought forms, the emotional forms. You identify with external forms, possessions, achievements, this, that, and that becomes...

But really, external forms are also thought forms. They get translated into mental images. So you're really always identified with mental images, even your my car.

You're not really identified with my car, but with the mental image of my car. So that is the world of form. That's the human.

And if that's all you know, then you're lost in the world because this world is the world of form. And most people still live like that. Lost in the world, which implies lost in their minds.

That's where the world starts. And the world being the world of form. And underneath it all is a timeless dimension, the spiritual dimension, the sacred dimension.

And that's the essence of who you are. And that is the deepest meaning of now.

[Speaker 3] (5:02:22 - 5:02:26)

And we access that through the stillness? Through the silence?

[Speaker 1] (5:02:26 - 5:03:03)

Yes. You could say the stillness, the silence, is it. But you cannot, of course, ever objectify it.

You can't say, there it is. That's why Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven does not come with signs to be perceived. Because if it's a sign, you say, oh, there it is, the kingdom of heaven, there it's coming.

It doesn't. First, of course, it cannot come because it's already here. And it can't be there because it's the essence of here.

It's here.

[Speaker 3] (5:03:03 - 5:03:17)

Well, to experience that, do we have to, when I think of going into silence, I think of this quiet, meditative state. Is it possible to experience that as we are doing in our life?

[Speaker 1] (5:03:17 - 5:07:47)

Yes. And this is the part of the art of living in this world, of living, of conscious living in this world, so that you are able to balance in your life the two dimensions, form and formlessness, world and spirit. So that you provide, you are a bridge, so to speak.

You, as this human being, are the bridge between the being and the human, the world, form and formlessness. And across this bridge flows something into this world from the other, from the timeless, sacred dimension that is not to be found, it is not to be found somewhere in space or time. God, you could say, God is not found in space or time.

God is not hiding somewhere in outer space. We know that by now. Even conventional Christianity is beginning to realize that God is not out there somewhere, although, well, anyway, let's not.

So we are here bridging the two worlds, and through you, as you live consciously, the dimension of the sacred or the divine or the timeless flows through you, through your words, if you are conscious and present, through your actions, not necessarily big significant actions, every action is significant, even lifting a cup, consciousness can flow into that, presence can flow into that, into power when you interact with other humans, and you are not preparing mentally what you are going to say, you are not judging them in any way, you are the space for them.

That means, at that moment, something through you as this form, something from the formless, the sacred dimension of God flows into this world of form. And in a strange way, it gradually transforms the world of form. The world of form loses its density and heaviness.

And what I'm describing is actually the deepest meaning of love, because when this flows into what you say, do, into your interactions, that space is essentially what love is, not the egoic understanding of love, which says, I need you, don't you ever dare leave me. But the love that recognizes that whatever you see out there in the world of form is a manifestation or an appearance in disguise, disguised as that particular temporary form of who you are in your essence, on the formless. So there's always a self-recognition when that dimension is open and flows through you into this world.

When I say you, at this moment I mean the form of you, which is ultimately not who you are, it's just an appearance. And that's our mission then, is to bring that dimension of

consciousness into this world. And that is what the universe wants.

And if we bring this dimension of consciousness into what we do and say, especially into interactions, we are fulfilling not only our purpose as humans, we are fulfilling the purpose of the universe, because the universe is moving continuously towards the greater and greater expression of consciousness. And gradually, we don't want to go too much into this, but my feeling is that gradually matter is becoming, through this, matter gradually becomes spirit and loses its density.

[Speaker 3] (5:07:48 - 5:08:01)

Well, would you like to lead us into that stillness? I know we would all be very honored to experience that. And it is our tradition in Unity to begin with prayer and stillness and meditation.

[Speaker 1] (5:08:02 - 5:18:35)

Well, we can, but the strange thing also happens when these words are spoken, you can actually experience in the background, you're hearing the words, you understand the words without needing to analyze them, and in the background of your perceptions, there is already the space. So even as we speak, in order to find the space, it is not necessary, it can be helpful from time to time to go into stillness, wonderful thing to do, but it is not confined to moments of stillness. The question is whether you are able to be aware in the background of your life, and that means of course now, whether you can be aware of this thing that cannot be defined, we could call it, can you be aware of the consciousness that you are, not the awareness of something, the awareness of awareness.

Can you sense the presence that you are? Yes, and again, it's not as Jesus said, you can't say, oh yeah, I've got it now, or you can't say, okay, I have achieved presence, and then claim, because you can only have it now. You can't say, now I have it, I'm an achiever of presence, or even if you say, I'm enlightened, it's dangerous to say that, because you're forming another form identity, you give yourself another form identity and imply that I'm going to be present forever, but there's only now, so the only question is, are you able to sense this background to all experience right now, and still be able to deal with things, perceive things, even take action, so that there's always a stillness in the background, even while you talk to people. What do we need to do now?

One can lose oneself so easily when you begin to use your mind, touch, start, words flow, they come out of you, they come out of the other person, and there's an enormous momentum behind the human mind, thousands of years of unconsciousness, and so the human mind is used to drawing your entire consciousness, and using it, making thoughts, more and more thoughts, so for many people still, all their consciousness is thought, they are not aware that underneath thought there is the vastness of

unconditioned consciousness, out of which thoughts are not separate from consciousness, they are a form that consciousness takes, and then the question is whether consciousness identifies completely with a form, and loses itself consciousness, or whether the forms can arise, and you are still conscious of the background, of the space of awareness, and as you say, it can be helpful at first to find it in moments of, when you say, okay, I'm going to be still now, still, and perhaps many of you, perhaps already practicing that, this is an advanced spiritual group, so I'll tell you what it is, to be able to simply say, there's nothing to think about now, so why should I think, there's no need to think, to voluntarily say, I will surrender right now, I'll surrender thought, relinquish thought, and what's left?

Now, two things are possible now, you can either fall below thought, or you rise above thought, that is an alertness, relaxed alertness, still alertness, you rise above thought, and you can then, this could be a spiritual practice, you can practice perceiving things through stillness, without naming, without labeling, whether you use auditory perception, or visual perception, or tactile, it doesn't matter, the predominant sense for most people is the visual, so you look around, you see everything, you even somehow know what it is you're looking, but you're not defining it, and limiting it by calling it something, that means the mystery of life is still there, you have not reduced the mystery, and the incredible beauty of this, by calling it something, and then believing if you attach a name to it, you know what it is, there's always, this is a great illusion, if you call it, I don't know what that plant is, but if I knew it, if you call it something, and then most people believe, now they know what it is, nothing has happened, you've just attached a sound to it. And it's not even a real ficus. So, but even inanimate objects, even inanimate objects are intensely alive, everything is mysterious, and the mysteries there surrounding you, the universe, and the delusion is that by naming it, that suddenly you know what it is.

So here the spiritual practice is to refrain from naming and labeling mentally. And that's the beauty, you practice at first in easy environments, out in nature is helpful, easier than being in a city, because in a city everything is man-made and can stimulate thought, especially you see writing everywhere, advertising, and that stimulates thought. It's very hard to look at something written and then not, let that become a thought.

You'd have to turn it around, upside down, and then perhaps it works. But even then the mind will try to figure out what to say. So out in nature, anything natural, just looking, listening, and this is being there fully, no matter where it is, you're absolutely present then.

You're above thought, in the state of alert presence. And everything becomes alive. You suddenly realize that when you were immersed in thinking and always labeling everything mentally, the universe was no longer alive to you.

You couldn't sense the aliveness of the universe anymore. And unfortunately millions still

live like that. They inhabit a universe that has become deadened by mental abstractions, continuous thinking, because every thought is some form of abstraction.

It's not it. And so the practice then is to bring that alert presence into perceptions and look around. You might even do it in your room, too, when you sit in your bedroom or living room.

Sit there for a while and just look around. Just to practice, can I perceive without this compulsion to label everything? And that's a beautiful thing to do.

Your perceptions become innocent. This is why Jesus said, unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. He means that those are little children whose minds have not yet started to conceptualize everything and judge everything.

And yet it's not quite the same as a little child because you have already transcended thought. The little child is still at a pre-thought level, and you have gone through it. So there's an added depth or dimension to that state, but it has certain similarities with the state of the innocent perception of a child.

And imagine if you can bring that into human interactions so that whatever, whoever you meet, any human being you meet, you don't label them. You just are there as the space for that perception of that. And so another way of putting this is that you are here as the aware space rather than as a person.

So the aware space, the being part of the human, becomes more important than the human. The human is still honored to the level of form. Yes, you have a name, you have a personal history, but you no longer derive your identity from your personal history, which after all is only a story you tell yourself in your head.

And certain emotions still go with that story. That's your personal history. Your personal history consists of thought and your photo albums.

And your photo albums are not going to survive for that long either. So two generations later they end up in some antique store and then somebody looks at them and all they see is some old, some human form. Who's that?

[Speaker 3] (5:18:35 - 5:19:17)

I wonder who that was. We're talking today with Eckhart Tolle, and more information is online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for being with us for this very special edition of The Leading Edge.

So Eckhart, what would the role then be of having the multitudes gather in prayer or having multiple people gather in the silence?

[Speaker 1] (5:19:18 - 5:21:44)

There's an energy field that arises when a group of people, even just two, come together and enter the state of presence. And that affects not only does it strengthen the presence in each member of the group, it helps, it's not presence, it's not your possession by the way, it's not, one might sometimes say your presence or my presence, that's only a way of speaking. Ultimately there isn't your presence or my presence, there's only presence.

You could say it's the divine presence or the presence of God in this world. And it can be very helpful to come together in a group with the purpose of being present, so you're present together. The difficulty often arises when the period of stillness comes to an end and the group starts to speak again.

The moment you start to speak, then the challenge is not to lose that sense of stillness or presence even while you start to think and speak again. And that can be quite a challenge because the momentum of the mind can be so overpowering, especially when you start discussing something. So after sitting together in presence, somebody says, OK, now let's discuss the meaning of presence.

Well, I think it, no, no, you're wrong. And before you know it, two minutes later, you're completely in some mind stream, identified with some mind stream. Off you go and suddenly you're fighting with somebody who is identified with a slightly different mind stream.

And so the presence is gone. Oh, where has it gone? It's become obscured.

You were not alert enough to remain. The alertness was lost. Alertness is consciousness without thought.

Presence ultimately is just bare, pure consciousness.

[Speaker 3] (5:21:44 - 5:22:07)

So this morning we were all gathered here in the Silent Unity Chapel and Rev. Dorothy Pearson led us into the silence in a very powerful way. And I had this experience, and I'm wondering if you've ever had this experience, where in the silence there is such a feeling of being connected and feeling the presence of source that for me I get very emotional.

[Speaker 1] (5:22:07 - 5:22:16)

Yes, it touches all levels. You can feel it physically even. You can feel it on the emotional level.

It reverberates on all levels.

[Speaker 3] (5:22:16 - 5:22:21)

So is that an emotional release? What is that emotion that we feel?

[Speaker 1] (5:22:21 - 5:22:52)

Well, it's like it's almost, I would say, it's an expression of love. That's how I experience that. When love arises, because this is how love arises, sometimes it touches the emotion and you cry.

It doesn't mean you're sad. There's great joy in that. So the joy can be so overpowering that it touches the emotional level also.

And it's very beautiful.

[Speaker 3] (5:22:52 - 5:23:24)

We have many questions that people through our online community, the UnityFM online community, and those that are here with us, many, many questions people have for you. This one is from Shirley Bowman, and she's a member of our online community. She says that in your book you say that there is nothing you can do to prepare yourself for attaining enlightenment, and we've talked about that.

So what about prayer and meditation and what Unity calls the silence? Are those processes that is the intention for those to lead us to enlightenment?

[Speaker 1] (5:23:25 - 5:23:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:23:25 - 5:23:26)

How does that connect?

[Speaker 1] (5:23:26 - 5:23:59)

Yes. In fact, what I say in the book is that there's nothing you can do to bring about awakening. Awakening is the first separation of consciousness from thinking.

And so somebody who is able to go into stillness and practice stillness has already gone through that. So that person has already begun to awaken. But if we're doing it in order to...

That means you haven't found the stillness yet. You're trying to find the stillness, but you can't find it.

[Speaker 3] (5:24:01 - 5:24:02)

More silence, more silence.

[Speaker 1] (5:24:03 - 5:24:59)

Yes, it would be very frustrating, because you would continue to come here and then... I just can't get there. And then you would have to, after a while, you would stay home and you can't do it anymore.

And then you have to wait for grace. In some form, the grace will then come, perhaps not by you going to a group. It might come in a different form.

Maybe you suddenly slip, you're walking on a wet road, and suddenly you fall and whatever, you break your arm or you don't, and suddenly your mind stops. The shock is so great that for a few seconds you're there in presence. Oh, that's it.

That would be the beginning of the awakening. And then you'll be able to come to a group and you've had a glimpse.

[Speaker 3] (5:24:59 - 5:25:01)

Can we do it without suffering?

[Speaker 1] (5:25:01 - 5:25:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:25:02 - 5:25:07)

Can we do it without the dark night of the soul? For those of us happy people, can we get there eventually?

[Speaker 1] (5:25:07 - 5:26:12)

Yes. Most people here, probably to a greater or lesser extent, have already gone through that phase of suffering. And for many of us, it's only because of the suffering that we've gone through we are here now.

If we hadn't had it, we would still be completely identified with the egoic self, the little me, and pursuing its little aims and ambitions and problem-making and so on. So most of us have gone through that stage, and the more you're able to invite presence into your life, the less you need suffering to force you into presence, or to break the egoic shell. Because for some people the density of the ego is just enormous, and they need some kind of shock.

I don't know what you're talking about there.

[Speaker 5] (5:26:12 - 5:26:14)

Maybe a few.

[Speaker 1] (5:26:15 - 5:26:36)

There was a spiritual teacher in India who called people with, I don't know if some of you know Indian terminology, you can actually suffix G to a name as a form of respect. So if somebody is called Krishna, you can call them Krishna G, which is a form of respect. So he called people with big egos, Ego Gs.

[Speaker 3] (5:26:39 - 5:26:42)

I just had to respect. Respect the ego.

[Speaker 1] (5:26:43 - 5:26:44)

Accept the ego.

[Speaker 3] (5:26:44 - 5:27:48)

Accept the ego. Here on Unity Campus, of course, the grounds are spectacular, and I was walking yesterday, of course, greeting a new earth, and there is a garden not far from where we're staying here. It's the Lowell Fillmore Garden, and there is a plaque and a poem is on it that is written by Lowell.

And as I read it, I thought, this is a new earth. So I brought it to share just to hear your comments on this. He writes, When for a purpose I had prayed and prayed and prayed Until my words seemed worn and bare with arduous use And all my fervor and persistence brought no hope I paused to give my weary brain a rest And ceased my anxious cry In that still moment, after self had tried and failed There came a glorious vision of God's power And, lo, my prayer was answered in that hour.

Very good. That's right here on campus.

[Speaker 7] (5:27:49 - 5:27:49)

Wonderful.

[Speaker 3] (5:27:49 - 5:27:50)

Like, that's a new earth.

[Speaker 7] (5:27:51 - 5:27:51)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:27:51 - 5:27:57)

Is that what you're trying... Because we've all had those fervent prayers. We pray and pray and pray and pray.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:57 - 5:27:57)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:27:57 - 5:28:00)

And that doesn't lead us to where we want to go. Yes. Why?

[Speaker 1] (5:28:01 - 5:30:19)

Well, for many people, prayer is still part of the old conditioning of your consciousness, which basically means you're looking to some future for fulfillment. Please let this happen. Then I'll be happy.

Please give me that. Then I'll be happy. Please don't let that happen.

And then I'll be happy. So the old mind structure, which believes it needs the future for fulfillment, is still operating even when people think they're being spiritual. And so they don't realize that the very same structure that worldly people are possessed by, they say, I can only get that bigger house or better job if only people could recognize that I'm the greatest, then I'll be happy.

Or if I see my picture in People magazine, then I'll be happy. And it's the same mind structure, or the same mind structure even with spiritual people. Whereas this prayer is where the old conditioning still operates.

It could also operate in people who are seeking enlightenment. Now that seems something more advanced than asking in prayer to be given something so that you can be happy, not realizing that the only place where you can be fulfilled and happy is now. You just have to go deeper into it.

Let's see. So if you are spiritual, then you might think, okay, you hear of enlightenment or liberation, whatever it's called, salvation. And okay, I need to attain that.

I need to become enlightened. You read books about it and so on. And you can become very knowledgeable.

And what is actually stopping you from realizing enlightenment or awakening, whatever, is the belief that it's going to come at some future moment. It's only when future is surrendered that it opens up. So it's only when you let go of that old mind structure that says, I need time.

[Speaker 3] (5:30:20 - 5:30:31)

So, for example, let's say someone is scheduled for surgery. So they might want to go into a prayerful state about a future upcoming surgery. What would be the best way?

[Speaker 1] (5:30:32 - 5:39:28)

The most powerful way is to absolutely not leave this moment, to refuse to budge from just now, so that time virtually collapses. And then there's such intensity behind that state, and that can be there also if you believe that the body may go soon, may dissolve soon, not much time left. So there's no point in looking for something in time.

If you know that the body might go in two weeks' time, two months' time, then there's no point in looking towards time for some fulfillment. So then it can happen that even unspiritual people who've spent their whole lives in worldly pursuits are suddenly driven, otherwise they become extremely miserable and unhappy, the depths of depression, of course. But even then it can happen that even unspiritual people are driven out of time into the now.

And suddenly the sacred, the spiritual dimension opens up in them, and they go, and you know they can sense the transformation. Light shines through the decaying form. And it's an amazing thing.

I've met a few people who, as they were going towards the dissolution of the body, entered that state of absolute intense presence, which is not a forced state, it's not a state of, I need to be present. It's a very relaxed intensity. And that's also where the spiritual master lives, so to speak, has his or her home, which is in the present moment, always aligned with now.

No matter what appears in the now, you say yes to the appearance of the now. If the appearance of now is a difficult person, an ego-G, then that's what is now. You don't say you should behave differently.

No. Of course, action is always possible. You can remove yourself from the ego-G and look the other way or leave the room.

But if you can't, you're stuck in an elevator with the ego-G, then you have to say, there you are. You are this now. The form that this now takes.

So the primordial spiritual practice is, whether you do it shortly before death, hopefully you do it sooner. Hence the ancient dictum, die before you die. This is the collapse of time.

Time then only has a practical purpose but is no longer important in your life. You're not looking for time to find yourself. You can only find yourself now because you are the presence.

And so there's an uncompromising yes to whatever form this moment takes. And even if it seems difficult, and even if it seems limiting, because the world of form is always limiting in one way or another. You cannot find the limitless in the world of form.

Even if you achieve everything that you wanted to achieve, wealth, great fame, everybody loves me, everybody admires me, then you will find, even there you will find your new life situation would have new limitations. You cannot find the limitless. Oprah can't go for walks in the street or go shopping.

She can't go out by herself. She would get mobbed. So that's a big limitation.

What great joy there is in just walking around, looking around. Can't do it anymore. Big limitation.

So if she had thought that fame would make her happy, she would now become unhappy again. So whatever you achieve in the world of form, sooner or later you will hit upon... It doesn't mean you cannot do things to go beyond certain limitations in your life.

Scarcity, well, there may be a period in your life when you do things to go beyond scarcity. Or healing your body, there may be things you can do to heal your body. These are all wonderful things.

But no matter what you do on the level of form, you will always hit upon some limitation. So when you encounter the limitation, it appears in the now. You say, OK, this is what is.

You don't judge it. You don't run away from it. And sometimes for some people the limitation is drastic.

The body may become incapacitated. It might not heal. Some people may experience healing, but not everybody experiences healing.

Or some limitation where everything that you've worked on for 25 years, 30 years of your life, collapses around you. You pick up your phone and say, How are my shares? The stockbroker says, It's all gone.

The stock market has collapsed. And your house has collapsed. Your wife has left you.

Now, this is what is. And if you bring an acceptance to the limitations that arise in the now, the very limitations become an opening into the space. Because the surrender and the acceptance of something that is seen as inevitable, in the form of this present moment, is always inevitable, because everything is as it is.

At this moment, it is as it is. You can't argue with that. You can take action.

Yes. But right now, is means is. It's already is.

And not to recognize the is-ness and become one with the is-ness means to be out of alignment with life. So if you recognize, all you have to accept is the is-ness of this moment. It doesn't mean you can't take action.

But right now, this is what is. And then action arises out of a state of acceptance. And enormous empowerment flows into it, not out of a state of negativity.

But the important thing is, when you accept the form, no matter what limitation it seems to be, completely, the so-called limitation becomes an opening into the inner space. Because through the acceptance of the outer limitation, the inner space of the formless opens up. This is how sometimes people who have suffered enormously were driven into awakening and enlightenment through their suffering.

They were driven to a point where they just couldn't struggle, couldn't have any more resistance to the suffering, because they realized at some point, the suffering arises not because of what's going on, but my resistance to what's going on. And so, surrender happens. With surrender, the inner space opens up.

The stillness underneath all that. And then, the very limitation becomes an open door. I believe that's the meaning of the crucified Jesus on the cross, because the meaning of the cross is that it's an expression of the most extreme limitation a human being can encounter, the most extreme suffering.

Totally helpless. So the cross is a torture instrument, but for some reason, the cross is also a symbol for the divine. And at first, this might seem very strange, especially if you come from outer space, and you're not used to it, you see it for the first time.

How is it that the humans have made the torture instrument into a symbol for the divine? And that is because behind the suffering that is totally accepted, not my will, but thy will be done, not the will of the little me, there's an acceptance. And through the acceptance, the very thing that was the torture instrument becomes the divine.

It opens up. And that's the transmutation of suffering.

[Speaker 3] (5:39:29 - 5:39:50)

We've had many of our questions relate to prayer, and this one in particular connects to what you're talking about, because it's asking, this is from our audience today, what is prayer to those who are attempting to live in the now? And who are we praying to, and is it a monologue? If we're living in the now, what is prayer?

[Speaker 1] (5:39:52 - 5:41:23)

Prayer, of course, is many different things according to where you are at in your consciousness. And as long as a person is still not, has not yet realized his or her oneness with the divine, then you're at a stage where the divine is approached on the level of duality. And for those people, prayer can be helpful up to a point until they need to let go of it.

So if you still see God as outside of you somewhere, then you're addressing God or asking for something. But increasingly, as you realize your essential oneness with the source, then your prayer would change and perhaps would become more simple. And so perhaps would just be little pointers that you use sometimes to remind yourself of the oneness.

Some lessons in A Course in Miracles, for example, have nice pointers like, let me remember who I am. Let me be still. These can be little pointers that take you into the reality of the realization of oneness.

[Speaker 3] (5:41:23 - 5:41:26)

In Unity, we talk about affirmative prayer.

[Speaker 1] (5:41:26 - 5:41:27)

Affirmative prayer, that's right.

[Speaker 3] (5:41:27 - 5:41:28)

The knowing. The knowing.

[Speaker 1] (5:41:28 - 5:41:47)

Yes, yes. And that can be helpful. So personally, I don't use the dualistic prayer.

But occasionally, affirmations come into my head as just spontaneous thoughts, and that's beautiful.

[Speaker 3] (5:41:48 - 5:42:06)

Well, David, from our online community, says that you suggest that we are not our thoughts. The Fillmore's have been quoted as saying that every thought is a prayer. He says, well, both statements resonate with me since I struggle with reconciling them.

Are we separate from even our intentional, positive, prayerful thoughts?

[Speaker 1] (5:42:07 - 5:44:43)

Now, thought, of course, for most people in the old consciousness, thought is a manifestation of the old conditioning of your mind. It comes from the past, and all the thought structures are repetitive, to a large extent negative. They feed the ego, which needs, of course, the negativity, which needs to have problems, which needs to have enemies.

So the continuous thought activity that most people are immersed in, involuntary and compulsive, they don't even know they're immersed in thought activity because they're

so identified with thought activity that is who they are, or think they are. So for those people, thought is totally repetitive, and it tends to recreate also experiences because thought is creative, so you are identified with certain conditioned thinking, so no matter what you do, you create a similar reality because you're still totally identified with the same thought structures. So people, for example, they think, okay, I need to get out of this relationship, and then they have another relationship and get married to another person, and finally, after a little while, you see you've recreated the same thing.

And some people get married three, four, five times, and they recreate always the same thing. Some people even recreate very abusive partners sometimes, and they think, okay, finally, marriage number three, I finally found this person is not abusive, and after a few months, he or she turns out to be abusive. The same thoughts that you are immersed in tend to create the same reality, and so the awakening is the realization that there is conditioned thinking, the voice in the head, continuously going through your mind, interpreting your experiences according to your past.

So whatever you experience, there's a filter of your thinking, and you don't really experience the world, only in a very remote and indirect way, you really only then ever experience your thinking, the structure of your thoughts. You only ever really experience the past in you. It's a dreadful state to be in.

[Speaker 3] (5:44:43 - 5:44:45)

For most of us, yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:44:46 - 5:45:08)

And it's called normal, normal human consciousness. And this is why for many humans, unless they begin to awaken spiritually, no real change ever happens. And even if you win in the lottery, it's not real change.

It just means you have the same drama and the same unhappiness in a luxury environment.

[Speaker 3] (5:45:09 - 5:45:14)

Laughter Until we can recreate that old reality.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:14 - 5:45:19)

Yes, until you lose the luxury environment because your old thoughts are to do with scarcity.

[Speaker 3] (5:45:19 - 5:45:35)

And that is one of the fundamental, one of our basic unity teachings is that our thoughts

do create, that thoughts held in mind produce after their kind. And so part of the spiritual discipline that we talk about is how do we become conscious in guiding our thoughts.

[Speaker 1] (5:45:35 - 5:49:29)

And this of course is why so little change happens in the world so far because the old thoughts are recreating the old reality. If you look at human history, 20th century history, dreadful. And the warfare that goes on.

But some change is coming in, it's true. So this is the fundamental shift that begins to happen when you're aware that there is old conditioned thinking that is continuously coloring your experiences, that is continuously interpreting your relationships, misinterpreting your relationships, imposing your own past on your present relationships. And so it's recreating the same madness again and again.

So whatever you, all your interpretations are erroneous because they are colored by the past in you. And this is why the Course in Miracles, for example, starts with little exercises which, for example, tells you to look around the room and say, I see only the past in this mug. I see only the past in this table.

I see only the past in this carpet. It might seem strange at first, but it's attempting to make you aware that this is what operates in you so that you can become free. And then it has another lesson which says, nothing I see in this room means anything.

This is one of the very early lessons in the Course. Nothing I see in this room means anything. Why is that a lesson?

Because it's attempting to remove the meaning that you impose on the world through your old conditioning. So this is all the old thought that recreates the old reality. And then, at some point, awakening begins to happen.

You begin to be aware of your thoughts. It means you're not free yet, but a little bit of freedom has come in. And then you can sometimes, you can already become aware of the most obvious, repetitive, negative, life-denying thoughts that have been going around in your head for years and years and years.

And suddenly, once you bring the awareness to it, the thoughts lose their intensity. And at some point you can choose to, you can recognize this as an old thought and say, oh, there's another old thought, and you can let go of it. You can replace it with another thought, or you can simply be present, even better.

Just bring presence, where before there was a thought that said, oh, he's a jerk, I know this kind of person, I've met so many of them. So immediately you relate to this person through this judgment. And he may not be.

On a deeper level, he isn't. But even on a surface level he may not be. He may just be your interpretation.

And then you recognize the thought, and then you can say, well, I honor the divinity in this human being, and that improves your relationships. And it goes even deeper if you can be simply present. And not, no judgment at all, just be the aware presence and listen to this person, or look at this person, and bring that into the relationship.

Then you become free of karma. Karma is all the old conditioning you carry around inside you that you are unconscious of, with which the past is recreated again and again. And karma can only dissolve through the arising of presence.

That's the miracle of human transformation.

[Speaker 3] (5:49:30 - 5:50:58)

We're talking with Eckhart Tolle, the best-selling author of A New Earth Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, online at www.eckharttolle.com. We thank you for joining us for this special edition of The Leading Edge. I'm Mindy Odlin, and we'll be back with more in just a moment.

Welcome back to The Leading Edge. I am Mindy Odlin, and this is a very special presentation of The Leading Edge. Our guest today, best-selling author Eckhart Tolle.

We've been talking about prayer, about presence, and I know many people from our audience today. We are here at the Silent Unity Chapel at Unity Village. They've been asking questions.

We have many people from our Unity FM online community asking questions. And this is one that just really jumped out to me because it's one that I want to know the answer to, too. This is from our audience today.

It says that they were listening to an interview with Barbara Walters on NPR this morning, and she says that she always asks people, What's the biggest misconception that people have about you? I would love to know. I get to be Barbara Walters here for a moment.

What is the biggest misconception that people have about you?

[Speaker 1] (5:50:59 - 5:57:04)

Well, there are probably different kinds depending where people are coming from. But I believe one is that they see me as special or enlightened. So there's a form identity that's created and projected that is almost the opposite of the reality because the reality of who you are is by relinquishing any kind of conceptual identity and any sense that you as this form is special, that you are more special than somebody else.

Enlightenment, that somebody is enlightened, is itself a contradiction. Enlightenment means that the sense of self, of I, the erroneous, the false mind-made I, has become transparent or given way to the light of consciousness that shines through. The light of consciousness is nobody's achievement or possession.

So even to say, I have achieved enlightenment is a big error. It means you haven't? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Nobody achieves enlightenment. It's only when the self that claims enlightenment gets out of the way or becomes at least transparent enough so that it doesn't cause problems anymore, then that which is beyond the form shines through, and that is the power. It's not my power.

The misconception is that this is my power. And, of course, it's happened sometimes even to people who have touched that and have that power flow through them. At some point, their mind came back and identified with it, and they've got another conceptual identity as me as very special.

And then the power becomes obscured again. It's like the clouds are coming back and obscure the sun. And the clouds are, of course, the stream of thinking, and then you have a new conceptual identity.

And it's more likely to happen to spiritual teachers who are surrounded only by disciples or followers, and so they project certain things onto the teachers and continuously bombarded with projections. You are the greatest. And then after a few years, some remnant of egoic consciousness gets triggered, and he begins to believe, he or she, that this is true.

So it's continuously going back into being nobody in particular. For example, being a spiritual teacher is not an identity as I see it, people believe this is my identity, but it's only an identity, it's only a function while the so-called teaching happens. Even the teaching doesn't come from this form, it's a process.

If there was nobody here, I would have nothing to say. The words come out because there's a space here that pulls out the words. I don't come here with some cumulative knowledge and this is what I'm going to say.

Nobody here, nothing, it is a complete, just a space, I don't know anything. And then when I go away from here, the function is relinquished. The important thing is then not to carry the conceptual identity of me being a spiritual teacher, because then I would still be a spiritual teacher when I'm walking around the supermarket, and I would feel special.

So always coming back to, I am just the, I am the space for this. I am, so it's no thing, no body in particular. That's the main, so the misconception is the projection of specialness.

That's how it is. And so when people, sometimes people when they come to talk, they feel an enormous arising inside of aliveness and presence and they might think it comes from here, but it can only come from within them. Perhaps something that's here can pull it out, but it must be in you if you can sense it.

Whatever you feel is there and the other person must also be in you. For example, stillness. In order to be aware, for example, that there's silence in this room, for a moment you have to be silent inside.

It's only the silence that can be aware of the silence, or the stillness which can be aware of the silence outside. If you have no stillness, you don't even know that there's silence because there's mental noise. So the strange thing is the specialness as opposed to others who are not special.

That's the delusion. I do feel special, but I know that everybody is equally special. So there's a sense of this life that I am is precious and it's everybody's identity.

[Speaker 3] (5:57:06 - 5:58:28)

You mentioned yourself, the role of spiritual teacher, and I noticed in today's Daily Word, the Daily Word has this uncanny ability to provide the perfect word on a perfect day. So here we are with Eckhart Tolle, the author of A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose, and the Daily Word today is purpose. It says, I love what I do and I do it with purpose.

As I reflect upon my talents and interests, which is what you were talking about, that you are a spiritual teacher, that is a role you play, the activities that bring me joy and fulfillment, I realize that these are the things that give shape to my purpose in life, and each one is a gift from God meant to be developed and shared. Each new day I welcome the opportunity to put my spiritual gifts into practice, to grow them and expand the blessing that they are. I confidently share my talents with the people around me with commitment and enthusiasm.

When I love what I do and I do it with purpose, I am a blessing to the world. I am a unique and divine expression of spirit. My life is filled with purpose and meaning as I develop and share my spiritual gifts with others.

So could you talk about what is a spiritual gift? Because it does seem like there are those of us who are spiritual teachers, there are those of us who are healers, there are those of us who nurture in different ways. How does that tie into what you were saying?

[Speaker 1] (5:58:30 - 5:59:03)

As I say in the book, I see there's your inner purpose and your outer purpose. Outer purpose varies from person to person. It's to do with your activity, your outer function in

this world.

Inner purpose is primary. It's the foundation for a satisfying and fruitful outer purpose. So inner purpose is the same for everybody.

Inner purpose, and of course the subtitle to the book is Awakening to Your Inner Purpose.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:04 - 5:59:07)

Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. You read this, right?

[Speaker 1] (5:59:08 - 5:59:14)

Laughter The subtitle actually was the idea of the editor.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:14 - 5:59:14)

Really?

[Speaker 1] (5:59:16 - 5:59:38)

Laughter He called and said I've had a great idea and said Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. That's it. That's good.

So Awakening to Your Life's Purpose already contains the answer because your life's purpose, your inner purpose, your primordial primary purpose is awakening.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:38 - 5:59:46)

Yes. One of the things that Reverend Paul Hasselbeck always says at the end of his program is to go out and be the best Christ you can be.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:46 - 5:59:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (5:59:47 - 5:59:49)

Our primary purpose. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (5:59:49 - 6:04:27)

The primary purpose is to be here as the awakened consciousness, present, conscious, and let that energy off, which is spiritual energy, which is a very fine vibration. Ultimately all energy is one, but the spiritual is the finest vibration. To let that flow into this world through whatever you do.

And what you do is secondary. Primary is always how you do what you do. So it doesn't

necessarily mean that you need to find something great, some great enterprise, creating some great structure in this world.

Some people will do that. But the primary thing is what energy flows into every little thing you do. And even if you're engaged in some great enterprise, even if your name is Oprah, for example, every great thing consists of a hundred little steps that you take every moment.

Even for Oprah, at some point she steps onto the stage. One step, two, three, walks to a chair, sits in a chair, looks at the person, a question comes. Spontaneously a lot of questions.

Enormous ability she has to tune into the other person, and then the right question comes, funny comments come spontaneously, all these things that developed in her over 30 years of practice. And so that's one example. Many people look for some significant life purpose, but the first question is, have you made every little action that you take significant?

There's no point in looking for some great, abstract, significant thing. What's the great purpose of my life? And you neglect to pay attention to what is at hand, whatever you are doing now in search for something significant and believing that this moment is not significant.

You're just looking for the significant thing. And then, of course, you're not going to find it because you're neglecting the very foundation for all significance, which is this moment. So are you getting this moment right?

Is this whatever you're doing at this moment done with presence, with attention? Are you honoring this moment? And if you're honoring this moment, even if you don't know exactly where you want to go, if you honor this moment and see this moment as primary, then it's much more likely that if you are, if it is your destiny to create something out there in this world, it will come much more quickly.

Even if you're doing something at this moment that you perhaps wouldn't want to do for the rest of your life. Maybe you've got a job that doesn't pay well and is repetitive. And yet, this is what is now.

You can be, if you're in a negative state there, at this moment doing that, it's much less likely that you will be finding your true life purpose. So always come to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation.

If you're friendly with the present moment, then you're friendly with life. Then life comes and will offer you whatever is most appropriate for you, which may have all kinds of things, working with people, working with plants, working with animals, working with structures, working with art, working with writing, whatever it is, in whatever form. And

you may use perhaps already what you are doing, but as you bring presence into it, it becomes empowered and deeper.

Let's say you're a hairdresser and you are quite good, but then suddenly you realize how important the present moment is and you pay attention to every moment, the person who is there, the hair, the doing, the words come, which means what you do will become not only very good, that you're a very good hairdresser, it means another dimension will come into what you do when people come to you.

[Speaker 3] (6:04:27 - 6:04:29)

Do you ever get tired of being so aware?

[Speaker 1] (6:04:30 - 6:04:31)

Ha ha ha!

[Speaker 3] (6:04:33 - 6:04:40)

I mean, when I think about every step, you know, being present with every step, with every snip of the scissors, it sounds like it could be kind of exhausting.

[Speaker 1] (6:04:43 - 6:05:13)

There's not perhaps an equal intensity all throughout your day. It's when you're engaged. You just zone out.

Well, of course, one gets tired sometimes, and there's a point at which although you endeavor to live above thought, always a moment comes late at night, or sometimes for me in the afternoon when it's time to take a nap. A moment comes around 5 o'clock. Uh-oh!

[Speaker 7] (6:05:14 - 6:05:14)

Ha ha ha!

[Speaker 1] (6:05:18 - 6:05:47)

When my level of consciousness falls below thought. Ha ha ha! And there's a little nap, and then wake up again.

Oh, and then it's fine. And then I go about things. So sometimes, at the moment, I don't have television, so that doesn't work.

Sometimes we watch films. We rent DVDs.

[Speaker 3] (6:05:48 - 6:06:02)

Well, that was the next question. Someone said, you are such an enlightened soul. I'm very grateful for your awareness, your wisdom, and your willingness to share your insights with the world.

Just out of curiosity, what do you do for fun? Ha ha ha! Do you have any hobbies?

[Speaker 1] (6:06:02 - 6:06:51)

Ha ha ha! Well, it doesn't sound very interesting. I like walking out in nature every day.

I go for a walk in the forest every day when I'm at home with a dog. That's fun. My hobby for a long time was photography.

And at the moment, I'm trying to switch from... I'm always late with technology. At the moment, I'm trying to switch from the old-fashioned film photography, which I know very well, to digital, which I don't know anything about.

But I have a little digital camera now. I'm trying to take photos and master that.

[Speaker 3] (6:06:51 - 6:06:52)

Capturing moments?

[Speaker 1] (6:06:53 - 6:06:53)

What?

[Speaker 3] (6:06:53 - 6:06:54)

You're capturing moments.

[Speaker 1] (6:06:54 - 6:07:49)

Yes. What I capture most, what I do with the camera when I use it, I walk around nature with the camera, and I look. There's no thought involved.

And I look at some whatever. There's little, relatively insignificant things usually, leaves, trees, flowers, blades of grass, stones, whatever, or clouds. And at some point, there's something that particularly conveys the sense of divine presence that's there, the sacredness of nature.

And then I walk around a bit more, looking. And then there's something else. So it's not so much to capture something from the past.

It's to capture the sacredness. I'm not a master photographer. It's just a joyful thing to do, that's all.

[Speaker 3] (6:07:49 - 6:07:56)

Do you email us some pictures? We'll put them up on the website. One with a digital camera, I'll help you.

[Speaker 1] (6:07:59 - 6:08:04)

There are a few pictures in the little booklet that comes with a DVD of my Fintan retreat.

[Speaker 3] (6:08:05 - 6:08:06)

Oh, very nice.

[Speaker 1] (6:08:06 - 6:08:08)

And that has some photos that I took of nature.

[Speaker 3] (6:08:09 - 6:08:47)

Lovely, lovely. Well, speaking of pictures, one thing that many of our listeners are talking about, and there's many books coming out on the topic of treasure maps, the idea of taking pictures of things that we want to manifest and putting them up in front of us. This question is from one of our listeners on our online community.

He says, My husband and I happen to be starting a treasure map. When we first started reading your book, I found it really difficult to continue the treasure map, sort of announcing to the universe all the things that I hope to see manifest in my life, and at the same time, stay in the present moment. Do you think the idea of treasure mapping is inconsistent with being in the now moment?

[Speaker 1] (6:08:48 - 6:21:25)

I don't think it is, because the only time when you can practice it is in the now. But the question is whether you have found the foundation for all power in the present moment, or whether you are still looking to the future for some kind of self-fulfillment, for the future to finally give you the sense that you have arrived, that you are somebody, that you are being recognized, that finally you can feel, at some point when you have the house and the car, that finally you can feel abundant when that comes, because right now you are not feeling abundant.

Why are you not feeling abundant? Because you are denying the now. So, you have to first find the foundation for abundance.

Abundance has very little to do with the number of things in your life. Abundance is the state of being. Abundance arises out of life itself, the being of life, which life is being, the I am.

Being and I am is the same thing, it just sounds like different words, because I am is the

first person singular of the infinitive to be, for those who have missed grammar at school. The infinitive is to be, the first person singular is I am, so it's the same word. So, when we talk about being, how do you experience being?

You can only experience being as the I am. And the I am is the foundation for all abundance, it's the realization of the fullness of being in yourself, which has nothing to do with the number of objects in your life. So, you find the fullness of being, Jesus pointed to it when he said, I want you to have life and I want you to have the fullness of life.

In some Bibles it's translated as abundant life. I want you to have abundant life, he said. Now, if you look deeply, you will see very soon that he is not talking about many possessions, he is talking about the sense of the fullness of being in yourself.

Not shopping malls, not that he wasn't prophesying the arrival of shopping malls. But finding that present moment, that deeply satisfying sense of beingness that comes when you enter the present moment fully and become friendly with now, go deeply into now. That's the vertical dimension of life, the now, which to most people doesn't exist.

They only know the horizontal, past, future, things, where am I, where can I find myself, I need to attain this. And then they might say, I want to make a treasure map, and then finally I can attain that. And so often, of course, people are not successful quite often with their treasure maps because there is the erroneous belief that they need to achieve something that's over there in the future, that they need to get that in order to feel the fulfillment and the fulfilled sense of self.

And even if they do get what they want, it will still not lead them to the fulfillment. Even if they do get the house and the car, they may sometimes do, even if they do get it, but they haven't found the fullness of life that can only be found in the now. Then for a little while they are elated, I made it, I made it.

And then they sit there in the big house and say, okay, what now, where do I go from here? Okay, I need to invite lots of people so that they can reaffirm to me that I'm somebody, that my house is bigger than theirs. And so you do that for a while, and then that doesn't work either.

And so you come to an emptiness when it often has happened with people who have achieved materially what they wanted to achieve, and yet they still feel empty. And sometimes it's at that point, either they become even more miserable or they begin taking drugs just to don't feel the pain anymore of the unfulfilled life, and you can't fool yourself anymore when you have achieved materially almost everything, and you're still unhappy, where can you go from there? You can't fool yourself that even more houses would make you finally happy.

Well, some try even that. So the foundation is the present moment and the fullness of life now, and so when you feel the fullness and then you look at a treasure map, you are now, the approach is very different, you are playing. There's a playfulness in the world of form.

You are playing because you are in this world of form, and part of being in this world of form is to interact with the forms of life. And why not try this out, see if I can manifest, not to find some fulfillment, but as a joyful, playful game with form. And then you look at your treasure map and you feel, whatever it is you are looking at, the house, you feel totally fulfilled already in that moment.

Obtaining the house couldn't possibly lead you to greater fulfillment. This happened to me, I drew spontaneously a picture, a circle on a sheet of paper before I ever wrote a book, and that said, book, it came to me one day spontaneously with colors, I drew the circle, book, and then I wrote, this was not so much me wanting to write a book, as something in me expressing what it wanted, the consciousness, and I wrote, translating into many languages, changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Millions. Millions, I didn't know that. And so it all came to pass, I had completely forgotten about this sheet of paper, and a few years ago I unpacked things that had been forwarded from England, a trunk, and I looked through it and I saw this old paper, and there was the power of now, and I looked in amazement, it had all come to pass, but I didn't want, this was so much a reality, this sheet of paper, that I already felt the fullness and the power of the power of now, I felt it already there, I didn't feel any greater or better when the book was out.

It was the same, the same feeling. So if you can feel the power, the unmanifested power, and then you can look at certain forms and play with forms, what flows into the manifestation is the unmanifested power, that expresses itself in many ways. One of the ways in which the unmanifested power, the one power, the one life, can express itself and wants to express itself, because this is a universe that creates form continuously, on so many levels, billions of life forms, so on that level, the universe wants to experience form, so you are part of that, you can take part in that game, the universe, this is the game of creating forms, and enjoying forms, and so you can do that if the foundation is the present moment, and then you are not dependent on your creation, and you realize, of course, whatever you create, at some point it will leave you again, or you leave it, and that's fine, so you are not dependent on the outer form to give you a sense of fulfillment, only then can you be successful at truly manifesting.

So that's the finding the power first within yourself. In this world there are two movements, one is the outgoing movement of the universe, which is the creation of form, greater and greater differentiation, the universe, they say, they may be right on some level, not on the deepest level, it started from a zero point of oneness, the

astronomers say there was a big bang, and the zero point, and nobody can say what was there before then, before then they say there was nothing, very strange, so out of the nothingness came the thingness of the world, the multitude of things, what the ancient Chinese texts call the ten thousand things, they didn't realize at that time it's billions of things, and so there is the outward movement of the universe, the creation of form, and the wanting to experience the form, but there is another movement in the universe, which is the return to the source, the two movements are there, the forms go out, but there is also, and every human being has the two movements inside him or her, one is the outward movement into creation, and one is the return movement home to the source, to the oneness, which in essence is the spiritual dimension, the spiritual dimension is the return movement of the universe, and the universe also wants that, it wants to know itself in its essence, it not only wants to create forms and lose itself in the forms, that's part of the game, it also wants to find itself after having lost itself, it wants to find itself and know itself deeply for the first time, and this actually is happening through the human form, and probably through other forms in the universe, which has the same movement, because as above, so below, so you are an expression of this universal cosmic two-fold movement, the outer and the return home, the outgoing and the return home, and you are in between these two, so don't lose yourself in the outgoing, that's a great danger, and this has happened to a large part of humanity, they lost themselves in the outgoing cycle, but ultimately even that the universe wanted, because nothing happens that the universe doesn't want, so you lose yourself in the outgoing, until finally the outgoing becomes so problematic and so differentiated, and then the return starts, back to the source, and then you can actually live balancing the two, connected to the source, and this I believe is the new earth, the new reality that's being created in this dimension, and humans can create that, which is create form without losing their connectedness with the essence of being, with God, and then that could lead to a kind of dimension that would be absolute bliss, also temporary, nothing last, but this would be a beautiful dimension, when on the planet humans live, who create things, but don't lose their connectedness with being, so then you could say that it's conscious creation, rather than unconscious creation.

[Speaker 3] (6:21:26 - 6:22:04)

Yes, well our guest today is Eckhart Tolle, Eckhart thank you so much for being with us this hour on The Leading Edge, I'm Mindy Odlin, if you feel nourished and uplifted by this program, or any of our programs on Unity FM, we invite you to make a contribution, and help us continue to be this voice, to bring this voice of truth and awakening to the planet, to the planet earth, and we thank you Eckhart for being here, more information is available online at www.EckhartTolle.com, thank you for tuning in, thank you for being a part of The Leading Edge, and for being a part of the voice of an awakening world, God bless.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:04 - 6:22:05)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (6:22:05 - 6:22:11)

Thank you. Thank you. That's our Tる.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (6:22:34 - 9:29:51)

This is question, I would see if I can keep the answers a little shorter than usual. But who knows? I can't guarantee it.

This is a question from somebody living in Saudi Arabia. "'Peace, Mr. Eckhart, I live in Saudi Arabia. "'I'm afraid if I stay in Saudi Arabia, "'I might lose this little light.

"'Should I emigrate to another culture? "'I feel responsible for my parents.' "'It is true that some places are more conducive "'to living consciously than others. "'There are energy fields, "'there are places where the energy field is more helpful, "'and there are places where the energy field "'seems to be more of a hindrance than a help.

"'So if you are able to move to an energy field "'that is more conducive, then do it. "'If there are strong reasons why you cannot, "'or you decide there are factors in your life, "'like in this case, this person's parents may need him, "'who knows, I don't know how old the questioner is. "'It is also true that anywhere, wherever you are, "'you can be present.

"'And if you are in a place "'that would not normally be considered conducive "'to being present, it is sometimes precisely there "'that you are forced to go deeper, "'as it is precisely, very often, "'in life circumstances that would usually be considered "'unfavorable or not suitable for spiritual advancement. "'It's precisely there that the motivation "'for awakening becomes particularly strong.'" I have, a while ago, when I was, I believe I gave a talk on Sufism, maybe one or two years ago, and I may have read from a little book of Sufi stories, the story about the young man, a wandering Sufi, although nobody recognized him as a Sufi, somewhere in the Middle East or North Africa. He looked a bit lost, so he was walking through a city, and this one of the most powerful men in the city looked at him and came and said, "'You must be an escaped slave.

"'You don't seem to know where you're going, "'so you come and work for me. "'You're now my slave. "'Have you been looking for your master?' And the young man said, "'Yes, I've been looking for my master for a long time.'" And so this powerful man said, "'Okay, you can work in my mansion or palace, and the young man said, "'Okay.'" And for several years, I don't know how many, 10 years or whatever, he worked as a servant and slave for this powerful man. And then after a number of years, this man, perhaps he became a little bit more conscious. He became a little bit guilty about having made this

man into his servant or slave. So he said, "'Okay, you can go now.

"'I'll give you your freedom.'" And the young man said, "'Oh, thank you.'" And he wandered on to his next destination. And he eventually became, unfortunately, I don't remember his name. He became, this young man became one of the great Sufi masters and became the teacher of many other Sufi masters.

So what is the significance of that story? The significance of that story is that you can use any life circumstance for awakening. And of course, we are speaking here not of overcoming, but of transcending.

So it seems that almost this young man consciously entered that to see, to discover within himself the transcendent dimension where outer circumstances become virtually irrelevant. So being a slave, that drove him deeper. And perhaps he knew that when he agreed and said, perhaps he knew already that he needed that limitation on his life in order to embrace more deeply the transcendent dimension.

So it was, one could say, in spite of his conditions, he was able to go deeper. And probably when he went to the deepest place of realization, it was then that the master said to him, the man said to him, you are free to go now. So the entire, that entire period in his life became really his spiritual practice.

And he must have known that he needed that limitation on his life in order to go deeper into the vertical dimension. If he had wandered on totally freely, perhaps it would not have happened. So, or perhaps life probably eventually would have given him some other limitation.

Life tends to do that. And so whatever limitation there is in your life then has that function of taking the focus into the vertical dimension. So more and more, he, this young man, disidentified from the external form of his position and so on.

There was a disidentification from all the forms of his life. And he went deeper and deeper into the formless and realizing himself as awareness, as consciousness. And my interpretation of the story is that at the moment of his deepest realization, the man said, you're now free to go.

And then as the story goes, he wandered on to Mecca and then started teaching. So his spiritual training was being a slave. A lovely story.

So this might be helpful. So the, if you can change the circumstances, usually I would say, don't, this is an extreme. The story is an extreme form of the spiritual awakening.

Usually I would not recommend that you seek out limitations in your life because there's enough with life. So whatever life gives you, use that. Spiritual history is full of people who were seeking for, well, all these penance and deprivation, self deprivation.

And of course there is a reason why to Western eyes, it sometimes looks very strange. There are people who deprive themselves of every comfort, who sleep on the rough surface in cold weather and who meditate in the middle of the winter in cold rooms for hours on end, or more extreme forms that you find sometimes in India, people who stand on one leg for years or whatever. And the Western, I say, why are they doing that?

There is a reason for that. And that is to bring about a dissident, complete disidentification from form and from whatever pain arises. So it's an attempt.

I don't know whether they know this or whether they just inherited as an almost a tradition, an attempt to reclaim, to take all identification out so that consciousness can be experienced in its pure non-form. This is for us, it's unlikely that for any of you standing on one leg for several years is the path, but it's to be, I respect all forms of spiritual practice, but in many cases, even that can become ego. And there are many holy men walking around India too who are making a living being a holy man.

It's a living and you get quite a bit of respect. There are others that are genuine. So you have to be able to tell the difference.

Is this a holy, is this an ego, ego G, holy man? Or is this a true holy man or woman? So in India, being a spiritual holy person can be a living.

In the West, it would be difficult, but who knows? So use with the limitations that life gives you. You don't have to seek out further suffering.

It's enough what you get. Life gives you what you need. That's all you need to know.

So whatever comes to you is for you to work with, to practice with, to either overcome or transcend or both overcome at the same time with detachment. Transcendence happens. I haven't been invited yet to Saudi Arabia, but if it should happen, then I may go.

And it's a very traditional country, I understand. Welcome. We are live in the present moment.

Usually when we do our live teaching or live meditation, I'm on the North American West Coast and it's one o'clock PM. But today I'm in Amsterdam and it's 10 o'clock PM. And for the first time, I'm using a webcam, which is quite close to my face.

So I feel really close to you. The room we are sitting in here is quite still apart from the occasional car passing by, not very often. And you may also hear the ticking of a clock, which is actually a very old Dutch standing clock.

And it may also chime. The main thing for our meditation tonight is becoming still or rather noticing that the stillness is already in you, waiting to be discovered. So our

session today probably is going to be a kind of transmission of stillness.

For the transmission to be received, it requires you to have access to a little bit of stillness inside you. And that little bit of stillness can receive the transmission, recognize itself in the transmission and then know itself more fully. If you can hear the ticking of the clock, that's of course, that signifies time.

And underneath and in between the ticking of the clock is the stillness, which signifies the timeless. Timeless consciousness. That timeless consciousness is the essence of who you are.

So as we sit here together, if it works for you, it means that the person is receding and presence is arising. And there's a shift suddenly in identity. Your sense of self is no longer derived from the silly person.

Every person is more or less silly with its judgments and all the mind stuff and the expectations and the shoulds and the shouldn'ts and the complaints and the regrets and the constant focus on future or past. Its resentments and grievances and anxieties and problems. God.

And there is another dimension of consciousness in you that's far deeper than the person. The person is a surface movement of that consciousness, fleeting, insubstantial, the ripples on the surface. And as the presence arises in you, you feel suddenly your connectedness with enormous power.

Energy, intelligence, and you're rooted in that. It is who you are ultimately, and that's always there. And that is where fear ends.

Fear can only exist on the surface where the person lives. And the natural condition of the surface entity is fear, often disguised as other things. And the absence of fear really means that for the first time you can actually feel the deep trust.

Absence of fear means trust. So you can feel a deep trust in life. You are connected with, you are one with something vast.

And through you, it emanates into this world, and either directly without your mind, like here now, this is an emanation of presence, but also it can flow into your mind and use your mind and inspire your thoughts and words and actions. Presence is felt or sensed with your entire body. Every cell of the body is alive with that presence.

Can you be in that state of alert presence continuously? Well, probably not, but it can be there in the background of your life, even while you are active, doing things, speaking, thinking, and yet you sense that spacious stillness in the background, in between two thoughts, and perhaps even while you're thinking. Then thinking happens in the foreground and that spacious, aware presence is in the background.

This, for example, is happening here now when I speak. The mind is being used and that's the foreground and there is in the background, this wonderful, vast, spacious stillness. Even though you may be able to enter the presence here, you may still find in certain situations, you lose it completely.

That's okay. Afterwards, you realize you'd lost it. While you lose the presence, you don't know you're losing the presence.

It just happens. A reaction takes over. The habitual mind pattern takes over.

The habitual mental, emotional reaction and some people have very deeply entrenched patterns in their mental, emotional field. Those patterns are an aspect of what the East calls karma and some people carry quite a heavy burden of karma. Usually, karma is interpreted as the things that happen to you in your life, the situation you're born into, parents, things that happen to you, the country, the energy field in which you grow up, all the relationships and so on and so on.

That is an aspect of karma, but more fundamentally, karma is not what happens to you, but more fundamentally, karma is how you react to what happens to you, how you deal with situations and people and challenges. You can magnify the difficulties and the challenges through reactivity, so you have heavy karma, or you may have so-called good karma, in which case the conditioning of your mind is relatively okay, it will have its limitations. There may be some presence already, but the only thing that really transmutes karma is the arising of presence and it will transmute even deeply entrenched karmic patterns, reactions that you don't seem to be able to get rid of.

It happened again and again, but it may take time. For the timeless to burn up, karma may take a little bit of time, not as much time as it took for karma, for those patterns to form thousands and thousands of years. And there's no reason why those dysfunctional patterns that make your life difficult cannot be transmuted or burned up through presence in this lifetime.

But you have to want presence, you have to choose presence. You have to want to be free. You have to want peace within yourself and not think something is more important out there than the inner peace within me.

And so the Course in Miracles says, I quote now, I want the peace of God. To say these words means nothing, but to mean these words means everything. Nobody can mean these words and not be healed, end of quote.

And those of you who have deeply entrenched heavy karmic patterns will be forced to go deeper into presence. Presence needs to be more acute to burn up those patterns. So you're forced to go deeper into greater alertness.

Otherwise the patterns will not become transmuted. Some harmless patterns may

always remain. Every human has a certain form, there may be certain habit patterns that do not cause any problems, and they may well survive in the light of presence.

Destructive patterns, destructive of yourself and others, problem making patterns, deeply negative patterns cannot survive in the light of presence. But you need to choose presence as much as possible. And I'm saying this to you because there is enough presence in you to be able to choose presence.

Without any presence, you cannot choose it. So ultimately it is presence that chooses presence. And it helps to be a little bit fed up with you, the person, same old stuff again and again, same old conflicts and problems, same thoughts, same complaints, same grievances, same anxieties, just small changes on the surface, but basically the same.

And so you may be fed up with the kind of life that those patterns produce, and that's a good thing. Some people at that point may consider suicide. I don't advise it.

There's something much better than that. And that is called, and I hope you are not shocked when I say it, or run away and switch on the television. That which is so much better than suicide, which I do not recommend because the unconscious patterns survive and they will seek a new body and then you'll end up with the same problems.

So that which is much better than suicide and which may shock you, but I'm telling this to you because you are all advanced. You're all well on the way to wake, full awakening. That which is much better than the person is self-annihilation of the person.

It's a kind of suicide, but a good one, which simply means you'd rather be present than the person. You'd rather be the presence than the person. And it means you're no longer addicted to thinking, which keeps the person continuously going.

But as much as possible, you choose not to think right now. The present moment. You can never be fully aligned with the present moment if you're imposing thought on it, and you cannot be truly aligned with life if you are imposing continuously your conditioned interpretations on.

So you choose, many of you are already able to do that as much as possible when thinking is not required. When you do your work, it may be required. Depends what kind of work you do.

In certain professions, very little thinking is required. You won't be good at it if you think. If you're a dancer, you can't be thinking while you dance.

Quite a few other professions, jobs, activities can be performed better in presence than when you're thinking. Other things may require thinking. If you're an accountant, you have to think.

Many other jobs may require thinking. That's fine. Using the mind for practical purposes.

But as much as possible, find the space. Don't be engaged in a continuous stream of thinking the whole day long. Find the spaces.

Choose. Why chime so many times when it's only half past 10? I don't know.

That's a mystery. So choose not to think. That's the self annihilation of the person.

You do it in the present moment. You just are alert and you face the present moment wherever it's there, whatever is there in alert presence. Why do you need to think?

If there is something to think, you will think beautifully. That, so that's why I said it may be good if you feel fed up with you, the person, because then you're ready to enter, embark on the process of self annihilation where the person is ready to go. There's so much presence that the person recedes and the patterns that make up the person become weaker and weaker, especially their deeply unconscious patterns that have been holding the ego in place for a long, long time.

The incarnation, your incarnation and mine and everybody's incarnation is relatively short in this lifetime. In addition, the planet is rapidly approaching a critical point. So the time is now and you need an almost, not quite, but almost aggressive determination to be present and that's not really aggression.

There's a sharpness to it. There is a power to it that cuts through all the BS that makes up the person. And I sometimes call that the sword of presence that cuts through time.

So if not now, when? When are you going to be ready? And then another being, one could almost say, emerges out of the dissolving person.

That's one way of putting it. And that's the true meaning of rebirth, which Jesus used that term. Rebirth is not some emotional high followed by a low, but something much more profound.

And as presence emerges where there was a person for a while, the aspect of the person always remain as long as you're in this incarnation. But the presence becomes stronger than the person. Who you are becomes predominantly the presence and just in the background, there's still the person.

And sometimes the person is in the foreground again, because we call this the awakening process. So a being, one could almost say, emerges, but the chicken cannot come out of the shell, the egg, until it cracks open. And that is the self-annihilation of the person.

And I'm saying self-annihilation for some people, it happens naturally, life does it to them. It annihilates their fictitious sense of identity by creating enormous amount of loss

or suffering. And it can happen through that, in the absence of any spiritual teaching, no spiritual teaching, just suffering, suffering, suffering.

And suddenly it can happen that way also, can eliminate all the unconscious pattern that pretend to be somebody. But you don't have to wait for that. It's actually much more pleasant to choose and easier.

And you may find the strange thing is, even as the being, this new being or the being, it's being itself shines through more and more. It's quite possible that some people that have known you for a long time, may not notice anything. They may, but it's also quite possible that they may not notice anything.

Family members, friends, you feel a different, a completely different being, and yet they don't seem to notice anything. And that is because many people, who are unconscious, people who are unconscious, they don't see you, they see the image they have of you in their minds. And if they've had an image of you for many, many years, they may not be able to see beyond the mental image they have of you.

So they won't know, that's fine. Wonderful, one of the many ways in which you'll feel liberated as presence arises, you do not need other people's recognition or acknowledgement. You do not even need other people to notice you.

In fact, it feels quite good not to be noticed. And you've realized you're more powerful as the valley than the mountain. There's greater depths to you as the valley.

So the ego situation arises, so the ego says, he completely ignored me. I was there in the room and he completely ignored me. How dare he completely ignore me?

And presence loves it. Don't need to be acknowledged. Because you're already sufficient unto yourself, at least you're in touch with life itself.

You don't need the substitutes anymore. But the wonderful thing is when you don't need the substitute anymore, you get them. Tend to recognition, people liking you.

Thank you. Welcome to our meditation. People all over the planet at the same time, now opening up to the spaciousness inside, inner space, that which is prior to thoughts, prior to emotions, prior to sense perceptions.

Always there, can be called stillness, presence, inner space. You just have to pay attention to it. And that attention already is it.

Attention to awareness or awareness of awareness. In other words, you become conscious right now of the fact that you are conscious. You can actually sense consciousness that you are beyond the person.

Completely non-conceptual, nothing to do with thinking. It's that which transcends the

person and that which transcends the world. Without awareness of that, the world and the person are troublesome.

And without awareness of that, the world will inspire fear because it's not all that stable, continuous flux, especially at this time, even if we are not affected directly by upheavals that are happening or have recently happened in different parts of the world, Japan, earthquake, tsunami, nuclear reactors, North Africa, upheavals, Middle East. Even if we are not directly affected, we can get a heightened sense, just knowing that this is going on, we can get a heightened sense of the fact that the world is not all that safe. Some people would say it's not safe anymore.

It never was safe, of course. It never is safe. It cannot be and is not meant to be safe.

It's the world of form continuously changing. So whether it's your personal life, if you're clinging for security, there's nothing wrong with arranging your life so that externally you have a certain degree of security to the extent to which it is possible. But if you're looking to, beyond the practical, if you're looking to the world of form, whether it is the structures around you, whether it's in your personal life, through relationship or through your job or through your life insurance, whether you look to that for a sense of inner peace, what is sometimes called peace of mind, or whether you look to the collective structures of your economy, social structures, whether you look to that for a sense of security, it cannot provide you with that for too long. So it's finding something within where a true sense of safety arises that has nothing to do with the externals of your life, personal or collective.

Then if some kind of disaster comes, and of course, inevitably, some kind of disaster will come because this body is going to die, that's a big disaster, sooner or later. And of course, other disasters may happen or may not happen or small, small ways in which things around you dissolve, doesn't have to be a big disaster. It's often those collective disasters that can bring about a leap in awareness in many people who are personally affected by that.

If that is your destiny, that's fine. It may not be your destiny to be affected by some collective disaster. I am sitting here in California at the moment, probably on a fault line.

So there is no absolute security that this chair that I'm sitting on and the floor the chair's on is still going to be here in 20 minutes time before we finish. It probably will be, we can't be sure. Or even that this body will still be alive in 20 minutes time, probably, we can't be sure.

Now it's for many people, it's the challenge of major or minor disasters in their lives that can push them into awakening. Without disaster, and I'm using this term now in a very wide sense, meaning any kind of dissolution of form around you, without that, consciousness would not even evolve. So although on one level, it is true to say that

disaster, it is tragic.

Yes, it's terrible. Yes, true. On another level, that also is part of, is a part of a much larger context.

And that larger context is the evolution of consciousness here. Consciousness, of course, is the formless essence within you, not a personal possession. So somehow the fluctuation of forms is part of the way in which consciousness evolves here in this dimension and comes into this dimension more fully.

The dimension of time, the timeless coming into the dimension of time. There's a paradox here, but that's how it is. The timeless within you coming into your personal life of time, that which is beyond the person, shining through the person.

And that is security. Because you can then sense beyond any conceptual explanations or beliefs, you can sense that which is timeless in you, which means eternal, which means indestructible beyond death. It's not that consciousness, don't believe mainstream culture, which tells you that consciousness is an epiphenomenon or a by-product of brain activity.

The brain is born out of consciousness, not the other way around. There's a modicum of consciousness, even in this chair or wherever you look, even inanimate, all around you. All the forms around you are consciousness having taken on a temporary form.

Life, another word for it. So there's life and there are forms of life. You move in that between the two, that's the balancing act, the dance of life between who you are in your essence, which you can sense at this very moment.

If this has any meaning to you, you can sense at this very moment that which is beyond the person in you, which is just the light of consciousness. And you're also aware of, you're still a person in the form. But the security, sense of security can never come from the forms.

That's always an illusory security if it's there. And illusory security is always threatened by an underlying fear. True security, true peace of mind, to use that expression, although it's not the mind, we do not need for disaster to happen in our lives to find that.

And perhaps if we find that without a disaster, or because we've already had our disasters and it has taken us there, perhaps we don't need to experience further external disaster. But if we do, it'll just be a deepening. It will result in a deepening.

Please know that the words that are being spoken here are only moving on the surface. Underneath the words, which you hear, which become concepts in your mind, underneath that is that to which the words point, that which is beyond concepts, beyond words, the underlying, deeper sense of beingness, which is consciousness itself. So as

you sit here, as we sit here, as I sit here, I can sense that.

It's a little silly to quantify it, but I could say as I speak here, and this can also be true for you as you listen, 80% of my consciousness, or maybe 90% is just an aware presence. And the remaining 20 or 10% is the mind formulating thoughts, which become words. But the mind that is formulating thoughts is inspired by that which is beyond thoughts.

It's just giving expression, always very limited, to that which cannot be spoken, but can be sensed in here and now. Some traditions may call it the higher self or whatever. It doesn't, as long as higher doesn't mean that you, that concept could mislead you into thinking that it's floating up there.

I'm looking for my higher self. So you're already looking somewhere else. Maybe inner, if your inner self would be a better, deeper self, essential self, or don't call it a self at all as the Buddhists do, the no self, the empty space, or call it the fullness.

The main thing is not to get attached to any concept, but just use it as a pointer. What's important is not the concept as an explanation, but that to which it points. That's why we're here.

So it's important when you listen to the news to be in touch with that space within. And then you can, if you feel compelled to take action, inspired to take action on the outer level to help one way or another, that's fine. But be rooted in the formless.

Every human being is a temporary manifestation in form of the one formless consciousness, which is evolving. And death and destruction is tragic on one level, which cannot be denied, and is part of something greater that can be sensed, not made into some explanation, but it needs to be known directly within you where death and destruction is no longer terrible. So as you sit here, it's an opportunity to be in spacious awareness.

And that is, of course, an enormous shift in consciousness from the normal state of compulsive thinking to spacious awareness right now, in which it seems that you don't know anything anymore. But in which you are connected to the source of all knowing. For any creative person, and everybody is meant to be creative, to fulfill his or her function, it's essential to enter the state of not knowing.

And then let action come out of that. Let words come out of that if they want to. Or just contemplation of the beauty of this world, which is also creative, if you can look around and see the aliveness and depths and beauty of everything.

Because you're no longer burdening the world with your mental concepts, which become the heavy person. And billions of heavy persons are strangling the planet. The act of just creative perception of everything around you.

A sense of wonder and aliveness. Even that's enough. Because what is that?

It is the universe becoming aware of itself. What it, it's saying, wow. You're not separate from the totality of the universe.

Whatever happens in you is part of the totality of the universe. And if you become conscious of the beauty of everything around you, the aliveness, the sacredness, then the universe is becoming conscious of its own creations. The consciousness that you are manifested the plants behind me, in front of me, everything.

The consciousness that you are. So you, you created all that. You are creating it at this moment by perceiving it.

So a conscious person cannot not be creative. And this is conscious, consciousness becoming conscious because it's been a dreamlike state of creating the world dream. Of course, the world dream continues, but in the middle of the world dream, the dreamer is becoming conscious.

And then the dream is no longer threatening. And even the nature of the dream changes. Not that anything is permanent, even in a more pleasant dream, but that's fine.

The demands that things should be permanent isn't there anymore. Freedom from what kept you imprisoned, the conditioned, mind made, sense of self, which we call the person or personality, freedom from that is just the most incredible liberation. And for the rest of your life, you still function as a person, but always at the back, there's the spacious awareness, even while in the foreground, you function as a person or personality.

If that's, that is a shift. And so the rest of your life here is living consciously in that way. Never becoming absorbed by the foreground of your life, which is so seductive, the pull of every thought, the pull of every emotion, every reaction, very seductive.

But your challenge is not to be completely pulled into these arising forms all the time. Yes, you interact with them, you deal with them, but always having a sense of spaciousness there, even as you discuss things, respond to people, deal with situations, listen, speak. The vital question for any person who is in the process of awakening at any moment is, at this moment, is there space in me?

Can I still sense that spaciousness in the background, so to speak? Or am I totally being absorbed by the foreground? That is the dreadful condition.

It's still normal. So nobody knows it's dreadful because it's, everybody's doing it. And then the rest of your life, your so-called life, is an adventure where you experiment with that, you continuously, and you will lose yourself many times in the foreground.

And suddenly you come back. The important thing is coming back. The important thing is not how many, the losing yourself is not important, but are you coming back?

Every time you come back, aware again of the spacious background, there's a growth in consciousness. More consciousness has come into this world through this form. And as a byproduct of that, relatively insignificant, your life becomes more pleasant.

Flows with greater ease. A deeper intelligence takes over. And of course, love.

You approach things, situations, with awareness of the spacious background, as you deal with the foreground, is loving. Very different from what the ego would call love. Welcome to our live meditation, or whatever you want to call it.

Becoming comfortable with just being, but remaining alert. Become aware that there are moments when you're not thinking. And then thought happens again.

And then there's another moment of just spacious presence. Which could arise spontaneously, or you could invite it into your life. Consciously bring more spacious presence into your life.

In daily life, with a simple thing like, for example, occasionally looking up in the sky Well, I don't see the sky here, because there are trees out there, but mostly, usually there's some sky somewhere. Look up at the sky. And for a moment, be aware of whatever is there, whether it's clouds, or clear sky, or completely overcast.

Just be aware of the totality of the sky, which is a vast spaciousness, without calling it anything in your mind. Just looking at the sky during the day. It's amazing that people go throughout, many people go throughout the day without ever really being aware of the sky above.

Because they're so concerned with what's happening down here below. So they're never aware of that spaciousness that surrounds them. So just looking at the sky, brings about a moment of spaciousness, and an interruption in the flow, or the stream of thinking, identification with which constitutes the person, the personal selfhood, sense of self.

So sometimes that arises spontaneously in the mind. In your daily life, a moment of space, a gap between thoughts. And when you don't know, you're not really aware of it, then you only sense it as a moment that feels good, a moment where you feel some joy, or a heightened sense of aliveness, or some inner peace, or even just a contentment with what is.

And usually that means, there's been a gap has arisen in the stream of thinking. You may not know that, and may only interpret it as, as I said, peace, joy, aliveness, happiness, generic term that covers all of those. And when you become conscious of it, when it arises spontaneously, then it can deepen, and you can be in it for longer.

You can be in the timeless dimension for longer. Slight paradox, I'm talking about it from the dimension of form, where there's time, looking at the times, and then the paradoxical statement arises, you can be in the timeless for longer. I've told the story before, some of you may know it, when I lived in London, and traveled on the underground, or the tube, or the subway, every day, there were a couple of stations where there was a more than usually wide gap between the train and the platform.

So when the train arrived at the platform, the doors opened, and the recorded announcement would say, mind the gap, and repeat again and again, mind the gap, mind the gap. Well, and of course, some tourists who didn't know English well enough, there was something more, gap, what's gap, where's the gap? And then they would fall into the gap.

But that could be a spiritual pointer. Be aware of the gap, the inner gap, be aware of what is a gap? A gap is a space between two things.

I don't think that's a dictionary definition of it, but I would define it as the space between two things. There's one thing there, and there's one thing there, in the middle, there's nothing, there's the gap, no thing. So finding the gap inside you between two thoughts, either being aware of it as it arises spontaneously in your life, when you're looking at beauty, or something new and unusual before you interpret it, there's a moment of just spacious perception, and there's the gap.

Look at the sky. Okay? So let's say you're working on your computer, and then the phone rings, you answer, and the text messages come in, and then you become aware of, okay, the moment of spaciousness, and then you look at the sky, completely different state of consciousness immediately arises.

And give yourself half a minute, or one minute to look at the sky. Half a minute is fine. It's not that long.

It brings about a gap when the stream of thinking subsides. And this, the most important thing you can do, if you even want to call it doing, because it frees you from being here only as the person, and you become aware that there is another dimension to who you are, which is the, traditionally called the spiritual dimension. The spiritual dimension is not elsewhere.

It's a dimension within you, where who you are as a person is transcended. And if you don't find that transcendence in your daily life, then there is no spiritual dimension in your daily life. Even if you talk about it, quote spiritual books, there's still no spiritual dimension in your daily life, unless there's the gap.

And it becomes as familiar to be the space as it is to be the person. In fact, more familiar, more satisfying. You really feel that there you are yourself.

In that space. Of course, there are other ways in which you can invite that gap, that space into your life apart from looking at the sky. Anything natural you look at can be helpful and bring about the gap, the tree.

But you have to look innocently with innocent perception, not judging it, comparing it, or referring to your knowledge or memory about it or associations, mental associations, none of that. Just looking like a child who hasn't learned the names yet. So you can either look at one thing and sense the spaciousness behind the perception, the peace, or you can look at the totality of whatever surrounds you.

Whether it's the room or you look out of the window, or if you're outside, just take in the totality of your surroundings, no matter where you are. You could be in a mansion or in a prison cell. It works in the same way.

And then you become aware of, yes, there's all these perceptions, but there's also a sense of spaciousness behind them. Peace. And when you access that dimension, whether you live in a mansion or a prison cell, still, of course, makes a difference in your life, but it's no longer of absolute importance, that's how I put it.

It is of relative importance. Before you have access to that dimension, whatever happens in your life is of absolute importance. It absorbs you completely.

It determines your happiness or unhappiness. Would I rather be in the mansion than in a prison cell? Yes, of course I would.

That doesn't have to be a mansion. It could be a lovely cabin in the woods. But if I had to be in a prison cell, I could still be the space for it and look around and surrender to whatever is there.

So just looking around you is another way of, if you don't name it, of being the space rather than being the person. Then after a while, the person comes back and you start thinking again about your past and your future and your problems and what you have to deal with and people around you. But imagine living all your life with nothing but that, thinking about things you have to deal with and people around you, the situation and liking it and disliking it, and reacting to it and your inner state, depending on whatever happens to be happening around you whether the person close to you is nice or not nice.

Terrible. At the mercy of whatever happens, a little thing falls and you go, you're upset. And never really happy anywhere.

There's always something missing. And then figuring out in your mind how you can become happy. Never getting there.

Because you haven't found who you are beyond the person. Having moments of insight while you meditate in formal meditation, where suddenly perhaps you have a glimpse of,

just being the presence, being the space. That's wonderful.

But it needs to translate into everyday life. Otherwise you can only be free when you sit cross-legged on the floor and have your eyes closed and your hands in a particular position and then you go, oh, and then you open your eyes again and it's time to get up. And immediately you're flooded with mental stuff, stream of things.

So you're just meditating. What do I have to do now? So therefore I say it is more important if you have formal meditation, it can be a wonderful help.

Even more important it is to have spacious moments throughout the day so that you become liberated from your attachment to the person, your complete identification with the person. And then the depths within you is there. You suddenly feel, sense that you are deeper than you thought and ever could think.

Because in that spacious presence where you are the unconditioned consciousness that is not confined to this body, that is where you are connected with the one universal consciousness and it merges with the one universal consciousness. So when you look at a statue of the Buddha, this is not the statue of a person that once lived. Nobody knows what the Buddha looked like.

The statue of the Buddha represents a state of consciousness and it is the state of consciousness of being the presence, transcending the person. And that's why the good statues of the Buddha have a hint of a smile because that is where true peace is found, alive peace. And so the Buddha goes like freedom from the person.

And therefore, of course, enlightenment, so-called enlightenment would mean, means to be throughout in your daily life in continuous connection with that dimension, the transcendent dimension. So the person never takes over completely. It still operates.

Therefore, enlightenment is, of course, not a personal achievement. It's there when the person makes room for something deeper. With some people it comes when the person gets battered by life so much that it crumbles the personal sense of self, suffers so much that finally it crumbles and suddenly there's that sense of deep peace and people don't know where that comes from.

Don't wait for that. It doesn't have to be that way. But if it is, then that's fine too.

So noticing when that spacious presence arises spontaneously in your life, perhaps when you look at a baby, it could be there, when you, there's a dog and you look at the dog and you feel the essence of the dog, the life essence, the being of the dog. Perhaps you feel it more easily than the being of another person because the person has a lot of mental stuff in the way. And for a moment, there's a sense of joy or aliveness.

It arises spontaneously. And then in addition, you're invited. I'd mentioned looking at the

sky.

I mentioned looking at nature, either one particular thing or looking at the totality of whatever surrounds you, even if it's not nature, even if it's just the room, just look around. And so you, the person in that moment, are not there. You're not, the person is no longer operating when you really look around you because you don't remember at that moment your past or your problems or your name or your date of birth or your ex-wife or ex-husband.

And you don't remember to think about the future. You're not interested in the next moment, what might come tomorrow. At that moment of pure perception, none of this operates.

So that's why I say the person isn't there in that moment. And you are, you become the perceiving consciousness and you are aware of yourself as the perceiving consciousness. If that doesn't, if you can't bring that into your life daily, then there's no spiritual dimension in your life.

Even if you've read a thousand spiritual books, even if you've attended many retreats and workshops, even if you have lived in a monastery for 30 years. Another way of inviting presence, of course, is a conscious breath, as I've often said, and it's well known that that is a good way of meditating, breath awareness. It doesn't have to be, however, a long meditation.

It can be a moment of one conscious breath in and out. Conscious means you're aware as you breathe in. You feel the air flowing into your body and you're there with your attention.

And there's no effort involved. You're not doing anything. You're just observing what's happening.

So the breath awareness is not a doing. If it's a doing, then it's not really working. So there's just, and during that gap or space, you are not a person.

You are the presence. So that's another way of inviting that dimension into your life. And you may notice that gradually, your absorption in the stream of thinking becomes less complete as you bring more spaces, moments of spaciousness into your life.

That also affects the way in which your mind operates. So thought still can draw you in, but after a while you notice it doesn't draw you in 100%. And that's the next step is that you find even while you're thinking, there's still an awareness of yourself as the space in which these thoughts happen.

So you're not totally identified with the thinking anymore. And that's the beginning of the end of ego because ego is complete identification with thoughts and the emotions that

go with the thoughts. They come to come together.

And then after a while, there's a continuous realization of the depths within you, even while you speak and think and listen. And you might just notice that thoughts are not that overpowering or important anymore. You become less interested in the stories and then he did this.

And you know what he said to me then? And then I said, how dare he? What was he thinking when he did that?

I wonder why he did that. And then comes the interpretation. Oh, he did that because, who knows?

It doesn't have to be that complicated. You can look into another person's eyes or right now, you can look into my eyes and just be the presence that's looking, just as I am the presence behind the looking, feeling, sensing yourself as the presence, not the person. So that means there is more than a connection between us.

There's a sense of non-separation because there's no more interference of thoughts, judgments, et cetera, et cetera. And the same presence is only one consciousness manifesting through and as different forms. And then comes the realization that when you look at me or into my eyes as the presence, you know that I am the presence just as you are and as such, we are one.

And that's why you love me. You love me as yourself. You recognize the oneness.

Any true love is always that. No separation, no sense of separation. So the person cannot love.

You cannot be a person, only a person in the absence of the transcendent dimension, which is obscured, the same as the other person. And then there are two persons thinking they love each other, but you can't. And of course it always goes wrong.

It never was love. It was a need for the other. And you can know that it wasn't love because if for whatever reason, the other suddenly leaves you or says, I love somebody else, suddenly, immediately you'll hate them.

And then the mind comes with the stories. He betrayed me. Of course, it's all true from the point of view of the ego, yes.

But if you're trapped in that thought, you're trapped in some prison cell, perhaps for the next 20 years, the prison of your mind. So let's just be here as the presence, look around, look back at me being the presence. Thank you.

Thank you. This is our evening meditation, which means more silence than words, hopefully, because you never know what comes out of this mouth. I don't.

And hopefully your stomach is not too full of good Italian food so that you can stay awake during the meditation. And if you notice somebody next to you drifting off and falling below thought, instead of rising above thought, maybe you can, or somebody in front of you, tap them on the shoulder gently. You don't need to hit them like the Zen masters.

If you feel at any point you want to close your eyes, it's fine. There's a common belief that when you meditate, your eyes need to be closed, but they don't need to be closed. It's wonderful to realize you can meditate with your eyes open.

Of course, what do I mean by meditate? Quite simply, being in thoughtless awareness. That's meditation.

And as I speak, and as you listen, you can be in thoughtless awareness, just a presence. Why not? You don't have to be always a heavy person carrying the baggage of past and a mind full of stuff.

There is another way of being in this world, and that's to be the presence. And this is all meditation. And even as I speak, you can be the presence because there's nothing to think about.

What I'm saying is so simple that you cannot figure it out by thinking about it because there's nothing to figure out. You can't work, what is he saying? What he's saying, exactly what he's saying.

You can't say, oh, I'm trying to understand what he's saying. There's nothing to understand. Stepping out of thinking does not involve further understanding through thinking.

That may be a little insulting, particularly to those of you who are highly educated and identify excessively with the content of your mind, that thinking is not the highest faculty in a human being. And that is a revolutionary statement that not many people in the mainstream culture would agree with, because all they know themselves is as thinking entities. But once you discover that thinking is not the highest, because you've touched something, a dimension in yourself that's beyond thinking, that is an evolutionary leap.

Even if you fall back into thinking, for a moment you have leapt like the first fish trying to leap out of the sea because they say life has developed in the sea and trying to crawl on land. It's you stopping thinking. And then it gets too difficult and then the fish gets back into the sea.

But that analogy, of course, we need to forget now because it's not going to take us several million years as it took to the fishes before they could start walking on land. If that whole story is true, who knows? It doesn't matter.

So as you might have noticed, what I'm talking about is very simple because I'm simply guiding you into presence, that's all. But more important than the words is what's behind and in between the words. And we could call that spaciousness or we could call that stillness.

Stillness doesn't matter what you call it, but you become more aware of the spaciousness than the words and the spaciousness is within you. It's there the moment the stream of thinking subsides. And there's only the presence left.

If your mind still tends to interfere and take you out of presence, allow the body, your body, to participate in the meditation so that you become present with every cell of the body. Every cell of the body becomes present. Now, somebody might say, okay, please explain what you mean by that.

No, I won't. It's too simple for that. Just sense the aliveness in your body.

Anywhere where you can feel it first is fine, the hands or the legs or the feet. And then the entire energy field that pervades the body becomes part of presence. And at first it seems that you, the consciousness, are observing the inner body feeling but if you go into it more deeply, you realize that there's no longer a subject, object relationship between you, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body.

You, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body merge and the totality of that becomes the state of presence. So it's no longer an observer and the observed. There's a merging of the observer and the observed.

So it means the entire being becomes aware. And that's a lovely state. Peaceful.

And then it's fairly easy not to drift off into thinking tomorrow's breakfast or next week's problems. Or last year's disappointments. And many other things that thinking is concerned with.

My problematic life. Somebody, perhaps it was Carl Jung, I'm not sure, said you cannot solve the problems of this world on the same level of consciousness that created the problems. So you can't solve your personal problems, which everybody has, unless you rise to a different state of consciousness, which is why we are here.

And when you solve your personal problems, that a sufficient number of humans do that, then that will affect the world problems. And that's how truly you can change the world, or to put it more accurately, how that change can happen. Through you.

It's not you, the doer, who is going to change the world, but it can happen through you. In the meantime, there's nothing wrong. In fact, it's wonderful to alleviate suffering where you see it in this world, where you feel called upon to help in your immediate environment or elsewhere.

That's a wonderful thing to do. But the causal level of the world's problems lies in the collective consciousness or unconsciousness of the world. And that is the only place, the consciousness, where deep and permanent change can happen so that eventually you don't need to help other humans anymore.

They don't need your help anymore. You can just commune joyfully with them. So you deal, of course, with the effects of unconsciousness in this world.

There's a lot of suffering, physical and psychological. And your focal point, even as you help others, your focal point needs to be this shift in consciousness. So the entire body is meditating, so to speak, is present as you sit here.

And you can now perhaps easily verify the effectiveness of a meditation question that was one of the favorite meditations of Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage. And that was the simple question, who am I? He said, just ask yourself that question and go deeply into it and then see what happens.

Who am I? And a little hint, I don't know if he gave that hint. The answer is not in words.

The answer is, let's see if it comes to you. Who am I? And you need to be, of course, alert and still after the question has been asked so that you can find out, who am I?

I'll give you another hint. You can't think about it. Then you get confused.

And then you will say, either you'll say, of course, I'm so and so, of course, then you're certain, but you're well below the answer. Or you say, I don't know, I'm so confused now. You're confusing me.

That's because you're trying to find an answer through thinking. Who am I? What remains is just an alertness, an alert space.

That's consciousness, let's call it your consciousness, but it's not yours. That's your consciousness minus the content, minus forms. Who am I?

And if you had, if somebody were forcing you to give an answer in words, the truthful answer would be, I don't know. Because it is not through any word or concept that you can know who you are. So on the level of words or concepts, you have to say, I don't know.

And yet there is undoubtedly a presence there that has no name and has no content and has no past and no future and no problems. Totally intangible, formless. This was what Jesus referred to as the kingdom of heaven.

Heaven, the vastness of sky. Heaven and sky in some words are the same word in some languages. He had to find some kind of word to describe the spaciousness of that inner state.

So he called it the kingdom in modern terminology, the dimension or the realm of vastness or spaciousness. But it's not the outer spaciousness, it's the inner. But of course, all words refer to outer things.

The kingdom of heaven is within you. And that's why, as it has no content and no form, the Buddha called it emptiness. So that is there, you don't need to sit in meditation to be that, to sense that.

In the background, in daily life, you practice thoughtlessness. Thoughtless in English has negative connotations, but it shouldn't have. It implies it's unawareness and you don't know what you're doing.

But there's a positive here when we use thoughtlessness, it has a very positive meaning. You've risen above thought. The way it's used in normal culture is you've fallen below thought and you don't know what you're doing.

This spaciousness, this inner spaciousness can be there at any time in your daily life. You bring in until it becomes permanent in the background of your being so that no matter what you do and even while you're thinking, there's still something you sense that's deeper than thinking so you're no longer lost in thinking. In other words, you are not the slave of the mind anymore.

You're not possessed by that entity anymore. And then it functions beautifully. Being here should help you to grow in, as I sometimes call it, presence power so that this presence arises more through you, in you.

So in your daily life, you can suddenly enter the state of spaciousness. Spacious awareness in between two actions, for example. Walking from here to there, picking something up, looking out of the window, five seconds of alert, spacious awareness as you're looking at the clouds instead of looking out of the window and having some kind of commentary about what you're looking at.

Not another rainy day. You don't need that. And even more beautiful sunshine, you can go beyond that too and just spacious awareness.

Five minutes, five seconds looking out of the window. Getting dressed while you put on your shoes. Just be alert, the alert presence instead of projecting yourself mentally to some future moment.

And as I said before, whenever you're waiting for something, a wonderful opportunity for entering that, go into the body. That can very easily take you there or pay attention to sense perceptions and feel as you pay attention to sense perceptions, feel the presence without which there would be no sense perceptions. You can do that now.

So there's what you see and what you hear. These are the two predominant sense

perceptions here. There's what you see and what you hear.

That makes up what I call it, as you might know, the surface of the present moment. All the sense perceptions are the surface of the present moment. Changes all the time.

And then there's the depths of the present moment that does not change. The now that is forever here, totally timeless. That is your presence, that space.

So you are what arises and more fundamentally, you are the space in which it arises. Ultimately, they're not separate, but we don't know to go into that now. You are the space for whatever arises in that space of consciousness.

So content, I call it, there's content. The content of your consciousness is sense perceptions, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching. Feeling.

The content of your consciousness is thoughts. The content of your consciousness is emotions. Those are basically, your life consists of, put these into a pot, sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions, stir.

Add a little bit of cayenne pepper. That's the drama. And whatever else, other spices that you want to add.

But basically, that is your life. The life which changes, your life is different from your life and your life and your life. They're all different lives and different worlds, but basically, the basic ingredients of your life and whatever your life situation is, are sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

Is there anything else on the surface? No. Now, all of that is content.

All of that is form. Now, for most people, that's all they know about their lives. They only know their life and themselves as a mixture, and every mixture is somehow different, of sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

And that's all there is, as far as they know. What they don't realize is, without the light of awareness, in which sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions appear, they wouldn't even, they couldn't exist. That is the space for them, and that is the consciousness itself.

And that, once you realize that dimension within yourself, the content of your life is of secondary importance. Before, it mattered so much what happened, or didn't happen, or failed to happen, or success, or failure, and it was, and you were so miserable when things went wrong, and you're elated when you fall in love. Of course, it doesn't last.

It doesn't last. When you only know content, you get more and more frustrated with life. And then you realize there is a deeper dimension, and that deeper dimension is who I am, essentially.

That is the true I, not the I that identifies with content, forms that arise. So that is truly the secret of life for humans, and others, I suppose, wherever they are, on this planet, and elsewhere in the galaxy, and other galaxies, because it cannot be that much different in other places in this galaxy, or other galaxies. There will be form and space, both externally, you can look around, and you can always see stuff.

In a room, you see the furniture. If you're outside, you see trees, and so on. Or if you look up into space at night, you see stars, most of which are suns, distant suns.

And what else do you see? Well, you don't see it, but there's vast spaciousness there. And even in this room, you might not pay attention to it, but this room could not exist if, in addition to the furniture in this room, and the physical bodies in this room, and all the other things in this room, and the ceiling, floor, and the walls of this room, if there were not space.

The space is the essence of this room. You can't say the room, if you describe the room, usually people would write down, give children a school exercise, describe this room, ceiling, walls, floor, what's in this room. Is that all there is?

Yes. Forgotten anything? No.

Except the most important thing, forgotten. It's the space. There's already a beautiful few short verses about this in the ancient Chinese Tao Te Ching, where it says, if you have a vessel or bowl, that which makes it useful is the space within it.

It's not the vessel. It's the space that's the essence of it. Those are lines.

So, in the same way, your life, or life anywhere in this galaxy, or the most distant galaxy, I can guarantee you that, even if they don't have physical bodies, there will be some forms, and there will be space in which these forms exist. So, no matter where you look, out there, here, the room, outside, it always applies. There is form, content, and space.

And space seems to be infinite. If you look into outer space, if you try to comprehend, nobody has reached the end of space. Nobody can say, does it end anywhere?

That was a problem for me when I was eight or nine years old. I tried to imagine the end of space. You go on, and you go on, and then suddenly, but what's beyond that?

And if there is something beyond, it is not the end. And I asked my father, and he tried also to envision, and he couldn't do it either. And this is why it's called infinity.

Infinity, and another lovely word, that's one with it, really, eternity. Infinity and eternity. They're really one.

I think that Einstein would agree with that. Time and space, space-time continuum. And infinity and eternity are your own essence.

Because what you discover within is the very foundation for the universe. That spaciousness is the space out of which everything came before the big bang. Just timeless, eternal, eternity and infinity, no form.

Scientists, they stop there. Sometimes they try to figure out the big bang, but nobody tries to go before the big bang because you can't. There was no before because there was no time.

Can't understand that. You go mad if you try to understand it. But you can know this experientially within yourself as inner space, just presence.

And as we saw the other day, we talked about the medieval form of spirituality like St. Francis attempting, not seeking, pleasant forms. St. Francis never sought out, he appreciated when they came, flowers and so on, but not seeking them out. In fact, being very happy with unpleasant forms, almost seeking out unpleasant forms.

And seeking out, like in the story that we heard, the man who went to the city square, sat there in the middle and got mocked and things thrown at him every day. And he went back every day in an attempt, I would call it, he wouldn't have called it that because he used different terminology, in an attempt at self annihilation, the annihilation of the ego. If you go back to the same square where you're mocked and people throw things at you and pull your hair and laugh at you and you go back every day, it is an attempt at inviting the death of the ego, the ego being identification with form, with content.

And if you make it so unpleasant, the content in your life, the idea behind it is that it forces you into transcendence. It forces you into going beyond content. And suddenly you find that deep peace inside and you don't know where it comes from.

And externally, there's the unpleasant conditions, but you have disidentified from them, thereby the ego has died. And then whatever terminology used to explain what happens to you then depends on your culture. As this man might have said, the monk, I don't know what he would have said, I became one with God or the sacredness or infinity, eternal peace.

And traditionally, one spiritual path in Christianity is closely related to that. And that is identification with the suffering of Jesus on the cross. So any suffering that you undergo, in your mind, you undergo it together with, you're repeating the archetype of the suffering of Jesus.

And that is how the image of the man on the cross can lead, if you identify with it, can, there's no guarantee it could mislead you too. There are lots of ways in which it can go wrong. It can lead to self-annihilation of the ego and then to an awakening into the formless.

And you're then in whatever terminology you use, you're one with the one, you're one with God. You are self-realized, enlightened, whatever you want to use, or you're simply at peace. So that can work too.

Most Christians have no idea these days that that can be a spiritual path. But for them, they practice a more superficial form of Christianity, mostly fairly superficial. A few Christians may go deep, but many practice it.

They don't see the depths in their own tradition. And because so many people don't see it anymore, Christianity is now at a dangerous point where nothing is forever, even everything evolves. So Christianity will either deepen or change or disappear.

And even the Pope knows that. He said, pointed to the fact that it was a critical time for the Christian religion. If you are a practicing Christian, this can still be a viable path to reaching that egoless state of oneness with whatever you want to call it.

If you're a Buddhist, that can still be a viable path or whatever it is, or you may not follow any tradition. And this is for the first time, as far as I know in the history of humanity, that spirituality arises without belonging to any particular, any one tradition without rejecting any of the older traditions. So self-annihilation, basically that's the basis of St. Francis, also practiced by many yogis and sadhus in India who practice extreme austerities and seek out unpleasantness. You don't have to do that. That's why you're here. But if you were not here, there are many other ways.

You could go to India and sit in a cave for 20 years, being stung by mosquitoes, but not minding anymore. And all kinds of bugs come and creep on you. And a few people will come and feed you.

It won't be gourmet food, but that's okay. You don't want gourmet food anymore. You want the worst, so that you can disidentify from form, so that life forces you deeper so that you go beyond all form.

That's the idea behind it. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. And if it doesn't work, then you just become more and more lifeless.

Have another go next time. But the most rapid way to self-annihilation and easier, more pleasant, but you need to be up to it. Your consciousness needs to have reached a certain level where this becomes a viable path for you.

And that is simply the cessation of compulsive thinking. To end compulsive thinking, so that you can enter by choice, I would say, and choose when you want to think and you don't want to think. And this is why, as I've quoted before, the wonderful words of the sage Nisargadatta Maharaj, who defined meditation, when they asked him, what is meditation?

And in his unique way of speaking, he said, meditation, it's the radical refusal to harbor thoughts. That's how he spoke. I saw some old videos.

The radical refusal to harbor thoughts. And that stopped some people's minds. I used to quote years ago in talks I haven't in a long time, the Zen master who, when asked to explain the true meaning of Zen, which even the monks who had been in the monastery for 10, 15, and 20 years didn't understand, please explain the true meaning of Zen.

And wherever he went and he was asked that question, he would never give a verbal answer. He would only raise his finger and look at you. And so the questioner would go, did you hear what I said?

But a few questioners got it. And that's called Satori. Satori is a moment of a flash of enlightenment.

It might not last, but it's a flash. Great teaching. Zen originally came into being because Buddhism had already become burdened with conceptualization and intellectualism.

And then Zen represented a renewal, a complete doing away with all scriptures, everything, just a direct pointing to the heart of humans or whatever the scriptures later said about it. Direct pointing, no more reference to old ancient scriptures. And you even have stories like the Buddha statues, the Buddha rupas, not to venerate them excessively.

In fact, if the Zen master got cold in the winter, he would be quite capable of throwing the wooden Buddha statue into the fire to keep. So Zen was a very radical thing. And then over the centuries, it became assumed more form.

Some of the power was lost, except in a few masters here and there. Then in itself, all became already also burdened to some extent. But originally Zen is a wonderful, wonderful teaching.

Basically, as you know, don't think. That's Zen. I just saved you 20 years in the monastery.

Let's just go within for a moment and close our eyes. I will use the bell as a signal to bring you back here and then we'll finish our meditation. You can go into the body if you like.

[Speaker 5] (9:34:24 - 9:34:28)

In honor of Maya. Of Maya. Your Maya.

[Speaker 7] (9:34:28 - 9:34:29)

Yeah.

[Speaker 5] (9:34:29 - 9:34:48)

My question is that killing and eating other sentient beings, animals, seems on some level just fundamentally wrong to me. But yet I can't find any spiritual justification for being a vegetarian. So I just wondered if you would speak to that.

If you would speak to that issue of eating meat or not.

[Speaker 2] (9:34:48 - 9:34:51)

Okay. Are you a vegetarian?

[Speaker 5] (9:34:51 - 9:34:59)

I'm not. I have been on a couple different occasions in my life, but it's real difficult living with a meat-loving husband.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:03 - 9:35:10)

And in what ways do you, you said it seems fundamentally wrong. What ways do you see it as fundamentally wrong?

[Speaker 5] (9:35:11 - 9:35:43)

Well, that's where my conflict comes in. I understand that that's the way of life, is that even animals eat other animals sort of thing. And maybe what bothers me probably more than actually eating animals is the way our society processes, keeps animals in an inhumane way.

I live in a rural area and I pass dairy farms and chicken houses all the time. And I can't eat veal anymore, once you see how these animals are kept.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:43 - 9:35:44)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (9:35:44 - 9:35:48)

So some of it might not be meat itself so much as what we do to these creatures.

[Speaker 2] (9:35:48 - 9:45:16)

Yes, the unconsciousness of how the meat is raised. Right, exactly. Yeah.

Yeah. Yes, I believe that too. I mean, the unconsciousness on the planet and how we grow our food and what we do to these animals.

And I can't remember which documentary film it was. Was it Food Inc. or something like

that?

Where it showed how chickens are raised and it's like, you're right, it's inhumane. And it's interesting what I, in the movie Avatar, what I found so beautiful in that movie is when the aliens knew that somehow sometimes killing happens, death has to happen, you kill something. But it was beautiful that there was this blessing that was said.

After the killing took place, before the killing took place, it's like, wow, thank you for this, I'm so sorry. Whatever, I can't remember the words that were used. I know there are some religions that believe that you should be vegetarian.

I was, in fact, in one of those religions for a time in my early 20s where you should be vegetarian. And they gave these reasons of, you know, well, in the beginning of Adam and Eve's time, they only ate fruits and vegetables. And it wasn't later until, you know, in the Bible, they started eating meat and all this sort of stuff.

And yes, that may be the case in the biblical sort of story. But only each person in themselves can really know within themselves what feels right for them. But I do believe that if you eat meat, if you want to eat meat, to buy and eat organic, humanely raised meat, and bless it, wow, you have a blessing for this life that has given its life to us.

And it's the same with fruits and vegetables. Actually, that's a living being as well. They're living.

So is one wrong and the other right? It's all life. So the blessing can be given for everything, for the vegetables that we take the life of by picking it out of the ground.

So it is life. Now, whether or not we were actually meant to, I have no idea, you know? I mean, it's, in nature, there are some animals that are meat-eating animals.

They have fangs, they can bite into it, they eat it. On the other hand, one can say, well, we don't really have those fangs. So are we supposed to eat meat?

Don't know. But only you will know what's right for you. When you're in colder climates and the plants and vegetables can't grow on the ground, what do you do?

So the question really is, is how, if you can just remain without judgment of anyone else in what they do in terms of eating, what foods they eat, but just go deeply within and feel what's right for you, this is how you will know. Now, how we get there to feel what's right for us it's like we have to, in a way, we have been living so numbly. I mean, we have been eating food that is truly not healthy for us.

It's been full of preservatives, you know, full of antibiotics. So, I mean, it's like we've lost all sensitivity within our whole body to know truly what's good for us. We don't even know when we're hungry anymore.

We'll just sometimes eat and eat and eat. We don't even know when we're hungry. We can't feel it.

We've lost that connection of feeling our bodies. So when you actually clean yourself out, there are many ways to do that. I do cleanses all the time.

You know, not all the time, but you know, at least three or four times a year. In fact, I was saying to Shannon and Anthony, I said, you know, I think I want to do a retreat that we're fasting. And they're like, well, does that mean we have to fast too?

But it's a cleansing. It's like a purifying of the body because we've grown sluggish inside. So as we awaken every cell of our body, we begin to feel what's right for us.

And it's amazing when you clean yourself on the physical level, when you can taste the difference between, like say you're eating a nice raw salad, your body, my body goes, wow, yes, yes. I'm getting some nutrients and food. And then when I eat something that say, for example, cooked and all the life has been out of it, you know, cooked out of it, or, you know, you eat something that's kind of junky and you go, oh, why did I eat that?

Only the next day you go eat it again. Because we lose this connection. We've lost connection, not only to the essence of who we are, but even in this, the form, our holy temples, this is our holy bodies here.

So it, get in touch with your holy body. It's so sad when, you know, it's interesting. We were staying with a family one time and they have a young boy and he was eating, you know, like Kentucky fried chicken and, you know, chips and cookies and all that sort of stuff.

And his mother offered this fruit and it's just like, no, no, no, I don't want that. But I ended up having some fruit there and I took one bite into it. I realized this is not a peach.

I remember what peaches taste like. This is not a peach. Like even, I mean, if we don't buy the organic things, we're not even eating fruit.

I don't know what we're eating, but we're not eating fruit. This is not a strawberry. It doesn't even taste like a strawberry.

Remember that lush, just juicy feeling when you would bite into it when we were kids? Well, those of us who are old enough. Remember that, you know, you just pick it from the tree.

It was just so juicy. You buy it from the store. It was just so juicy.

It was all natural. All the sugar already there inherent in that fruit was so sweet. Well, it's not even sweet anymore.

And I thought, no wonder these kids are not eating fruit. It's not even fruit. It doesn't even taste sweet.

It doesn't even taste like fruit. I love fruit because I remember what it tastes like. So I'll eat it and I'll buy something.

If I end up eating something, it's like, oh, I don't want to eat this because it's not fruit. So they are starving. Our children are starving for something real, but they don't have it available to them for whatever reasons.

There's not enough money to buy organic food. What a shame. You know, it's like we can't even feed our children organic, fresh fruits and vegetables.

They don't know what it tastes like. They can grow up and not even know what an apple really tastes like. That's sad.

So, but they have to fill themselves with something. They are dying for that sweetness. So they grab that.